Sabara Tribe in Indian History

Dr. Giridhar Gamang

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Preface

The Sabara tribe has travelled all along with epics, history and present day world. They are distributed and have alienated themselves with Indian soil on all directions, somewhere they have their identity, somewhere they have lost it.

They have been associated with Jainism, Buddhism, Savisim, Vaishnavites, Christianity and their original tribal culture. They have come through the scale of time and time scale in both ways.

The classical work of Verrier Elwin, 'The Religion of an Indian Tribe' brought to the modern world, the glimpses of Sabara tribe of Orissa and an introduction to the anthropological world at large.

This is an attempt to put forth the Sabara tribes in Indian soil, and their association and contribution to the Indian history, culture and religions. It shall be appreciated by all readers and research scholars. We hope to come up in future on various other tribal groups of our country and their history in making the new India.

This book as it is drawn up heavily on the works of various authors. I am personally indebted to them.

I am thankful to Dr. Das Kornel for his contribution to assist in preparing this book.

Bhubaneswar, **Giridhar Gamang**
January, 2008

About the Book

The tribal history is a majorr part of the Indian history.All tribals have played their role in making Indian history and are associated in making a new India. The tribes have been mentioned in Mahabharata, various literary works of Indian literature since ages.

Sabara, as a tribe group, was first mentioned in Atreya Brahman.They are as of now, distributed all over the Indian soil, some where they have their identity and some where they have lost.

A large population of Sabara are distributed in Central India, Orissa and small populations of Sabara still live in various parts of India.

The Sabaras have travelled all along with the Indian religions; they were Buddhists, may be Jainas, were Savites, were Vaishnavites and now some are even Christians. They have been associated with Lord Jagannath cult since ages,thus have carved a separate tribal identity of themselves in the arena of religious cult administrations of Orissa.

This book gives a breif account of dynasties,especially of the Sabara lineage and their relationship to Kalinga and Dakshina-Kosala.A special chapter on Sabaras and Kharavela,Eastern Gangas,Pallavas and others finds place in the book.

Another chapter, with reference to Sabara tribe and Indian literture has been reviewed.

About the author

Dr. Giridhar Gamang born (1943) in a Sabara tribal Chief's family at Dibirisingi village of undivided Koraput district, Orissa. His grandfather, Sri Malia Gamang, invented script for Sabara language, Matarbanum. Dr. Gamang is presently a Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha). After graduation from S.K.C.G College, Paralakhemundi, Ganjam district, Orissa, he served as a teacher before entering politics in 1972 during which year he got elected from Koraput Parliamentary Constituency to the Fifth Lok Sabha. He has represented uninterruptedly the same constituency (Congress Party) in the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelveth and fourteenth Lok Sabha. He first became a member of the Union Council of Ministers in the Ministry of Supply and Rehabilitation. Later, he was Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Welfare, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism, Minister of State (I.C) in the Ministry of Communications, Minster of State for Food Processing Industries (I.C), Minister of State (I.C) Ministry of Planning, programming Implementations and Minister of State for Mines. Dr. Gamang, was the President of Orissa Pradesh Congress Committee and was the Chief Minister of Orissa State during 1999.

A Parliamentarian of long standing, Dr. Gamang with intimate knowledge of tribal and rural development has engaged himself in several noteworthy endeavours for socio-economic development of weaker-sections. He has expertise in tribal music creativity; in conservation and popularisation of traditional tribal dance forms and music. He has also compiled a book on Sabar songs in Oriya script titled "PIRADA NA KENING" and author of a book titled "Constitutional Provisions for the

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Sabara Tribe and Distribution

Sabara tribe a well known ancient tribe of India that has been dealt in this volume who are also known as Saora, Sabara, Soara, Sora, Shabar, Sabar, Sahar, Samvara, Sour, Sar, Sayar, Suir, Siwir, Soria, Swiri, Surris and Saura etc. and have been spelt in various literature, epic and still from the present places of their living, may be the surviving remnants of the ancient Sabaras.

Pt. Nilakantha Das wrote, "Before the Dravidians, the Austric people came to India mostly by the same north-western route or routes from the Mediterranean regions"(1). They were a cultured people for those days. After the advent of the Dravidians and then the Aryans they i.e. these Austrics or Sabaras generally went to the hills and jungles and lived there in their strongholds. These strongholds are particularly mentioned in the account of Samvara (which seems to be another name of the Sabara) in the Rg.Veda (2). He further wrote, "Another factor perhaps is that the kinsmen of these Sabaras had migrated with their languages and customs to the still Eastern regions, where these Austric people had also arrived directly by the sea-route leaving traces in the Kalinga coast on the way. The aboriginal remnants of these Austrics are still there in Eastern India, such as Kols, Santals, Khasis, Nagas etc. Thus the gradual migration of these Sabara people was by these land and sea routes, as has been indicated, towards Indonesia and further islands, perhaps up to America."(3)

Vitebsky (1993) said based on his studies of Sabara of Koraput "Above all, their (Sora) linguistic connections lie ultimately with the south east Asia. Linguists classify the Sora language as belonging to the Munda group, which includes some other Indian 'tribal' languages such as Mundari, Ho, Santal and Bondo; while they consider this group itself to be a branch of the Austro-asiatic family which includes Mon-khmer languages such as Cambodian, as well

as many of the languages of the interior of the Malay peninsula and of the Montgnard peoples of Vietnam (4, 5 & 6) (Pinnow 1959; Zide 1966). Though there are historical uncertainties, this suggests that such peoples from an ancient stratum of the population across tropical Asia who in such country have been surrounded and dispossessed by larger, settled rice-growing population."

Cunningham writes; "that in early times, where the name of the Sabara is used, it probably covers all the different divisions of the Kols, as they are now called, including Kurkus and Bhils in the west, with Santals and Bhuiyas, Mundas and Hos, Bhumij and Juangs in the east. In later times, when Somadeva wrote the Katha Sarit Sagara, the name of Sabara is used as synonymous with Pulinda and Bhilla, and, therefore, means only a man of an aboriginal tribe, of whom the writer knew nothing except by hearsay."(7)

But the persistence with which the name recurs suggests that the Sabras were an important and widely scattered tribe throughout India; perhaps the confusion about the name is due to the fact that from the earliest period the Saoras were broken up into different sections; many of them have lost their language and have been assimilated in culture and religion of their neighbours.

Cunningham continues, "There seems good reason to believe that the Sabaras were formerly the dominant branch of the great Kolarian family, and that their power lasted down to a comparatively late period, when they were pushed aside by other Kolarian tribes in the north and east, and by the Gonds in the south"(8). B.C.Mazumdar is of the same opinion: "All the Kolarians are but branches of the Sabara people"(9). S. C. Roy agrees and refers to the fact that the Kolarian Santals are called Sabaras by the Male Paharias (10). Khageswar Mohapatro gave the Munda language speaking tribals in Orissa as Soara, Gorum, Gotaha, Gutob Gadaba, Bondo (Remo), Kharia, Juang, Korku, Santali, Mundari, Bir Hoare, Ho and Karwa. His classification was based on South, Central and North Munda speaking regions (11). These Munda language speaking tribes also belong to the ancient leaders, Soara and thus the above mentioned

Orissan tribes are all related to each other and also to Soara. The ***Parna-Sabaras*** mentioned by Varaha Mihira (about A. D. 550) are supposed to be the leaf-clad Juangs, another tribe of the same group, though they may equally well be the leaf-clad Saoras (12).

Parna-Sabaras in Sagar of Madhya Pradesh, Chanda District of Maharashtra:

Cunningham opines that the Parna-Sabaras were the most powerful of the wild races. He surmised that the chief town in the country of the Phyllitae (i.e. the Parna-Sabaras or the leaf-wearing Sabaras) and of the Kondali, called Agara, was probably Sagar (13). These Parna-Sabaras have been identified with the Pans, a very low aboriginal caste in Orissa and the Eastern Circars. The term Parna-Sabara (leaf-wearing Sabara) may appropriately be applied to the women in the wilder parts of the ***Chanda district*** of the Central Provinces, who wear no clothes at all, but only a string round the waist to which they suspend a bunch of leaves and another behind. The same practice is reported to exist in the Kol country and also in Orissa.

Sabaras in Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh:

When Verrier Elwin visited some Sabara villages in Sarangarh in Bastar in 1941, they were an attractive people as described by him. Further Grigson says, they were manufacturing magnificent specimens of baskets in brightly coloured patterns for sale in the bazar in Sarangarh town (14).

Sabaras (Soppu) in South Kanara of Karnataka:

To these leaf-wearing classes of Sabaras we may add those of South Kanara who are called the Soppu (Toppu) Koragars. These are one class of the aboriginal people who wear leaves round their waist. The larger tribe to which they belong played an important part in the early history of the district (15).

With the above notices of the Sabaras, we may dispense with

the erroneous notions of Rice that the modern Saukars (traders) were Sabara in origin, and that the latter belonged to a race who worshipped the moon. This view of Rice is not acceptable because Saukars is a general term, sometimes more appropriate to landlords and some business communities of the area.

Sabara Pharia or Sauria in Singhbhum (Bihar), and Keonjhar Orissa

The Bandkars living between Singhbhum and Keonjhar described themselves as Saoras in the Census of 1872, and Risley includes them in his section on 'Sabaras' (16). The Males of the Rajmahal Hills call, or used to call, themselves Savar Paharia or Sauria, and they resemble the Hill Saoras of Koraput and Ganjam is one remarkable feature and they too have no exogamous septs.

Hill Kharias a branch of Sabaras of Dalbhum and Mayurbhanj Kharias:

The Hill Kharias of Dhalbhum trace their ancestry back to Sabbar-Burha and Sabbar-Burhi. S. C. Roy writes: "This would appear to indicate that the Kharias originally formed a branch of the great Sabaras people. The tradition of the Mayurbhanj Kharias that they are descendants of Basu Sabara lends further support to this conjecture"(17). Cunningham advances evidence to suggest a link, which had already been traced by Dalton, between the Saoras and the Bhuiyas (18). The Purans, who are probably also to be classed with the Bhuiyas, claim racial affinity with the Saoras as well as with the Kharias. Crooke and Nesfield show how the Musahars are connected with both Cheros and Saoras (19).

Sabaras in Malkangiri of Koraput district, Orissa:

According to Mazumdar, the Saoras formerly occupied the areas watered by the Savari River, and thus once dominated the eastern part of Bastar (20).

Principalities of Dhenkanal and Dhinka Saora:

The Dhenkanal princely state, where over 50,000 Sabaras are still living, and Pal Lahara are both traditionally associated with the Sabaras. Dhenkanal is said to have derived its name from a Saora named Dhenka, who owned a strip of land on which the present residence of the Raja stands. It is said that Singh Bidyadhar conquered the country of Dhenka Saora, the captured King Dhinka Sabara was put to death. Before his death, he requested that his head should always be worshipped. As a mark of respect near the Raja's palace a stone which is known as Dhenka Sabara Munda, receives sacrifice once or twice a year. The newly wedded princes of the Dhenkanal family pay respect at Dhinka Sabara Munda before entering the palace. The Chintapatris, are supposed to be of Sabara origin who cook the offerings for Dhinka Sabara Munda at the Kapilas temple near Dhenkanal. The Brahmins do not accept the cooked rice-offerings prepared by Chintapatris (21).

Pal Lahara principality origin and Sabaras:

The first Pal Lahara Raja was from Rajput clan, who came to Puri with a body of his followers and on return to home, he was requested by Saoras, Konds, Malhars and Thoras to rule over them. He then got the name of Pal because he was hidden by the Saoras under a heap of straw (pala) during a battle (22).

The Borasambar Zamindari of Sambalpur and Savar linkage:

The Borasambar Zamindari of Sambalpur also has a link with the Saoras. The ruling family is an aristocratic representative of the tribal Binjhals, who resemble the Saoras in having no exogamous clans and determining marriage simply by relationship. One of the recent zamindars edited an old book named **Nrisimha Mahatmya,** in which he claimed a Kshattriya origin, describing how four heroic youths, filled with magic power, married Saora girls and became the ancestors of the Binjhals. B. C. Mazumdar says 'this fact shows that Binjha was once the name of a section of the Saoras who came to Orissa by migrating from the Vindhyan region. Suarmar Zamindari,

in the Raipur district, is believed by some to have taken its name from the Saoras. It has been held by a Gond family for many generations, and according to family tradition the name Suarmar was given to the zamindari on account of an enormous boar which devastated the country and which was slain by Puranrai, the first zamindar, but antiquarians say that the present name is a corruption of Sawarmal, the land of the Sawar tribe, who are said to have originally occupied the tract (23).

The Sunris of Gwalior, Narwar and South Rajputana:

To the south-west of Gwalior and Narwar and South Rajputana are a race known as the Surris. They were the Saurs or the Sabaras (24).

North Madhya Pradesh

Cunningham divides the Saoras into two great divisions, the western and the eastern. During his travels in 1881, he first came across some Saoras in the District of Damoh and from thence westward to Sagar and Bhilsa. He traced them in the hilly tracts to the south of Lalitpur and Gwalior, where they were called Sabarias and were known as wood-cutters and charcoal-burners. According to him, there were not less than 120,000 western Saoras (25). This was also confirmed later by Grigson who found that the Saoras of Saugar district landless and depressed.

He found some Saoras mixed with Bhils, and those towards Hoshangabad and Nimar touched the Korkus, 'a cognate race'. The western Saoras all spoke the same Hindi dialect. They were short, and their features were 'generally of the Tartar type', with broad flat noses, slightly oblique eyes and dark skins. They could endure great fatigue and were 'active and vigorous foresters' (26).

Eastern U.P. and Bihar:

Cunningham also noticed small numbers of Saoras living in the hills to the south of Shahabad and Bihar, where they were known by the name of Suir (27).

Central U.P. and Ganges:

There were also a few, called Suirai, in the Allahabad District, and they appeared again in the Ghazipur district to the north of the Ganges, and another small body apparently of the same clan lived in eastern Oudh under the name of Sarhia. According to Russell and Hira Lal, the Saoras numbered about 100,000 in the Bundelkhand districts in 1911 (28). As per the study made by Garrick, the Suirs and Swiris of Ghazibad were estimated to be only 47 total population (29). Crooke gave some account of the 'Soeri, Soiri or Suri' of Allahabad and Benares.

Madhya Pradesh, Betwa river to Mahandi extended to Orissa, South Orissa

According to Cunningham, the eastern Saoras were separated from their brethren by a broad tract of country extending from Allahabad to Jabalpur in one direction and from the Betwa river to the Mahanadi in the other. From the Mahanadi they extend in scattered groups across Chhattisgarh, through Sambalpur and down to Ganjam and Koraput (30). Russell and Hira Lal say that the eastern Saoras have two main divisions called Laria and Uriya, or those belonging to Chhattisgarh and Sambalpur respectively (31).

Hutton says 'there can be little doubt, but that the Sawars of the Orissa Maliahs and of Chhattisgarh, the Saoras of Saugor, Damoh and Bundelkhand, and the Saharia caste of Malwa and Gwalior all belong to the same original stock' (32).

From the epigraphic records it is also clear that they spread over a vast area on either side of the Vindhyas up to the Ganges in the North and the Godavari in the South and they also made their movement as far South as Polkonda and Srikurman in the Vizagapatam districts. They had also their settlement in the Dandaka forest of the Central India (33).

They are mainly distributed in the Ganjam and Vizagapatam districts of Madras and Orissa and also in the Central Province,

specially in Chattishgarh, Saugor and in Damoh districts (34). Among them there are two different groups named Savar and Sahar. Those of them, who came into contact with the groups named Savar and Sahar. Those of them, who came into contact with the Hindus and have adopted the Hindu custom are called Sahar and the other as Savar (35).

Lodha, Lodh or Nodh, a tribe of United Provinces, Central Province, Orissa and West Bengal claim their descent from the ancient Sabaras (36). Risley has described them as a tribe allied to the modern Sabara (37).

Sabaras distribution:

Mamata Choudhury (1977) wrote, "The Sabaras as a tribe was first mentioned in the Aitareya Brahmana (38) and they inhabited near the Indus (39). Subsequently they moved east wards as far as Gangetic plain (40). In the Epic period, they were to the south of Dandak forest (41), the present Ganjam district.(42)

In the Puranas, the Sabaras have been classified as dwellers of the Vindhya range (43), but Brhat Samhita speaks that they were inhabitation of western region also.(44)

The South India inscription (45) shows that the Sabaras were spread on a vast land on either side of Vindhyas up to the Ganges in the North and the Godavari in the south and during the course of time they have settled as far as south of Palkonda, and Sri-Kurmam in Srikakulam as well as Viziagapatnam district of A.P."(46)

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Sabara Population and Distribution from Census Reports

As per the Kitts's Compendium, the distribution of Saoras in 1881 is as follows:

Bengal	...	82,952
Central Provinces	...	130,719
Madras	...	131,981
North-West Provinces	...	2,099
Hyderabad	...	8

This makes a total of 347,759 individuals for the whole of India, but was only approximate(1).

According to 1941 Census, no Saoras returned from the United Provinces, Central India, Bengal or Gwalior(2). They were concentrated mainly in Orissa, the Central Provinces (now Madhya Pradesh), Madras and Bihar. In Orissa the names of 316,244 persons were recorded and the main centres of the Saora population were(3).

In 1941, there were 316,244 Saoras in Orissa, of whom 95,479 and 29,521 were in the Ganjam Agency and plains respectively. There were 52,518 Saoras in Koraput. Approximately, two-thirds of these are Hill Saoras, whose number may thus be estimated at about 100,000.

		1941	1981
Athgarh(Sundargarh)	..	6,584	2216
Balasore	..	1,993	9956
Cuttack	..	36,435	69492
Dhenkanal	..	27,270	54281
Ganjam(Agency)	..	95,479	181821
Ganjam(Plains)	..	29,521	

		1941	1981
Kalahandi	..	20,014	55605
Keonjhar	..	5,414	22469
Koraput	..	52,518	75913
Mayurbhanj	..	3,583	11038
Pal Lahara	..	1,239	-
Patna (Bolangir)	..	2,207	56268
Puri	..	26,385	49296
Sambalpur	..	7,602	112379

Verrier Elwin opined on the tribal census that there was remarkable decrease in the figures from those recorded in 1931; in Sambalpur district went down by 71,504, Ganjam Plains by 33,505, in Patna State by 24,743. The variations were mainly due to redistribution of territory or change of official name of their community in the hope of gaining social advancement, sometimes to the inefficiency of semi-literate enumerators was the observations, which he concluded from his studies in Bastar tribal census (4).

The Saora in Orissa, the population in different years is given as below(5):

1951	...	1,91,401
1961	...	3,11,614
1971	...	3,42,757
1981	...	3,70,061

According to 1981 census of Orissa report the Saora and Shabar tribe population have been reported in two heads separately. But as per T.Patnaik in his chapter of Shabar writes that Shabar are a tribal community distributed in the coastal districts of Orissa; he writes further that they are supposed to be a part of the great Savar tribe to which Saora belong. The Shabar tribe is divided in two main divisions (6). One is the Jara Shabar, descendants of Jara, who killed Lord Srikrishna, and the other group is Vasu Shabar, the devotees of Lord Jagannath. Thus for all real purposes the Shabar,

an acculturated section of the Saoras are taken into one and the same 'Sabara' tribe and the population is reported to be 70073 in Orissa.

In the Central Provinces also the Saora population decreased by 24,106. In 1941 it was distributed as follows:

		1941
Bilaspur	...	9,197
Chhattisgarh States	...	349
Raigarh	...	10,037
Raipur	...	22,039
Saugor	...	11,712

This gives the total figure of 42,734 individuals in Madhya Pradesh.

In 1941 there were 2,754 Saora population in Bihar, of which 1,752 were in Manbhum district (7).

With the adjustment of boundaries in 1936, most of the Saoras of Madras came down to Orissa. But there remained in 1941 a total of 14,696, out of which 12,842 were in Vizagapatam Agency (8).

Comparing the above Census figures with the earliest reports, it appears that the western Saoras have almost disappeared as a separate community assimilating in their neighbours and even losing their distinctive name.

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Sabara Tribe in Orissa

Historically there is evidence to suggest that the Sabaras have been squeezed into the present geography from a much wider areas. The Saoras of Vizagapatam Agency, all show few signs of affinity with the Hill Saoras of Ganjam and Koraput, remarked Elwin. In most cases, they have assimilated themselves to the local population, adopting its language, its dress, its manners and its gods(1). The Saoras described by Russell and Hira Lal have customs different from those of the Hill Saoras. They have totemistic exogamous divisions, they worship such deities as Bhavani and Dulha Deo; their women 'abstain from wearing nose-rings'; they are famous for their sorceries(2). The Saoras discussed by Risley are different again(3). The Bankura Saoras had exogamous and totemistic septs; Brahmins served them as priests; they forbade widow-remarriage(4). The Orissa Saoras worship Thanpati and Bansuri or Thakurani. The Bendkar Saoras described by Tickell in 1842 spoke Ho or Uriya; they worshipped Kali; were particular about food-taboos; did not collect ashes from a pyre; danced in Bhuiya fashion(5). Dalton who describes the Bendkars as an isolated fragment of Sabaras, regards them as members of the great Bhuiya family (6).

Hill Saoras of Ganjam and Koraput districts of Orissa:

For convenience, Verrier Elwin calls the Hill Saoras of the Agency Tracts of the Ganjam and Koraput districts of the modern State of Orissa as Saoras. They may be further defined by territory and by culture. A Saora is some one calling himself by this name and living within a rough rectangle above the Vamsadhara River; one side of the rectangle stretches north from the Agency boundary near Parlakimidi for about forty miles; another runs east from Gunupur for twenty. The most typical of these Saoras live in the Gumma and Serango Muttas (sub-divisions) of the Ganjam district, and in the villages within ten miles of Pottasingi in Koraput. To the north through Peddakimidi and Chinnakimidi are other Saora villages

which gradually change their character as they approach the country of the Konds (7).

All the Saoras living in this area are not Hill Saoras. They are distinguished by certain cultural traits. Their villages have long streets, in which they build little shrines and erect menhirs. They sacrifice buffaloes for their dead. Both male and female shamans meet their religious needs. They have both terraced and shifting cultivation. The men put on a long-cloth and their women wear a hand-woven brown-bordered skirt and do not usually wear anything else. The women greatly enlarge the lobes of their ears and have a tatoo mark down the middle of the forehead. The tatoo colours came from local black berry. The Hill Saoras have retained their own language and very few of them speak any other.

Sitapati writes; "the country of the Hill Saoras must formerly have extended southwards to include the three talukas of Palakonda, Parlakimidi and Tekkali, but the Telugus, a stronger and more cunning people, drove them back and those who did not leave (and there are still hundreds of Saora villages in these talukas) they assimilated, teaching them their language and many of their social and religious customs"(8).

The Sabaras as usual have been assimilated into the surrounding populations and are known by different names. Those who speak Telugu are called Kampu Sabara - Kampu meaning Telugu: the word actually is the name of a Telugu Sudra caste. Other 'civilized' Sabaras are the Sudda and Sarda or 'reformed' Sabaras, the Based Sabaras, who live towards the coastal areas (based means 'salt'); the Bimma Saoras in the direction of Jirango; may be due to the Bhima temple of Mahendragiri and a number of other small groups. Some of these retain their language, but most of them have lost or are losing it(9).

The Hill Saoras are called Lombo Lanjhia Saoras by their Oriya neighbours in reference to the long-tailed loin-cloth which they wear. Ramamurti writes that this nickname is resented by Saoras(10). But Verrier Elwin writes that some Saoras are proud of being called Lanjhia, which they take to be synonymous with 'hillman'(11).

Further Elwin continues, **Lombo Lanjhia** is the only single term which covers all the Hill Saoras as distinct from the plains Saoras of the Kampu or Sudda type. The Hill Saoras themselves use a variety of names for the different sections of their tribe. The most important branch calls itself Jati. Jati is not a Saora word, but an Oriya one which these Saoras have borrowed to show that they are the real thing, the true caste (jati), pure in blood, custom and religion. The only characteristic, however, that distinguishes them from other Hill Saoras is that officially they do not eat beef. Another group is called **Arsi Saoras.** Arsi means monkey, but the name has no totemic reference and the only reason for it seems to be the curious affinity which many Saoras have for monkeys, and perhaps the long-tailed cloth. The Arsi Saoras eat monkeys, but so do most of the others. Some of the Arsis weave cloth and are only Hill Saoras who do so.

The **Jadu Saoras** live on the tops of hills and in the wilder tracts north of Serango. There is little difference between Jadu Saoras and the Jati Saoras, for they claim that they do not eat beef. But Jati Saoras insist that this untrue and that both the Jadu and Arsi Saoras have no real reverence for the cow and are therefore inferior breeds.

The **Kindal and Takala Saoras** are basket-makers. They also do general bamboo work, weaving mats and winnowing-fans and making brooms. At Karja ceremonies the Kindals ceremonially exchange mats and baskets for a share in the rice and meat of the feast.

The **Kumbit Saoras** are potters. The Gontaras work in bell-metal and brass. The Luaras are blacksmiths: they donot smelt iron and their little forges can only handle the roughest work.

The different groups are vaguely endogamous. But nobody thinks very much of it if a Jati Saora marries an Arsi or a Jadu. The barriers between the cultivating and occupational groups are a little stronger, yet an elopement between a Kumbit and a Jadu is not taken very seriously and is forgiven after the payment of a small fine. It is said that members of priests' families have to be more careful: a

Jati Buyya cannot marry an Arsi Buyya or Jadu Buyya, still less-for example-a Kumbit Poroja.

Yet members of all these groups look, dress and behave alike. Even the blacksmiths and potters have their fields and cattle, and when they are cultivating there is nothing whatever to distinguish them from the others. They often live together in the same street. At Boramsingi the Jatis, Takalas and Luaras live next door to one another. Kumbit potters had their own street in Alangda. Arsis had a special quarter in Tumulu, Takalas occupied most of Karanjaju. A blacksmith's forge is often from fear of fire, built outside a village and the blacksmith may make his house nearby.

The Saora hills are remarkably homogeneious. The only other inhabitants are the Doms and, in Ganjam district, the Paiks who work for the Bissoyi and Patro overlords. These Doms and Paiks live in their own villages, at Pottasingi, Nuagada, Gumma, Serango"(12).

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(2) Russell,R.V. and Lal Hire (1916) The Tribes and Castes of Central Provinces of India, London, Vol.IV, p.4

(3) Risley, H (1915) The People of India, Calcutta, Vol.II, p.242

(4) Ibid

(5) Dalton, E.T.(1872) Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, Calcutta, p-149

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(8) Sitapati, G.V.(1938) The Soras and their Country, Journal of Andhra Historical Res.Society,Vol.XII, pp 578

(9) Elwin, Verrier (1955) The Religion of an Indian Tribe, p.8 Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, Bombay, p.8

(10) Ramamurti,G.V.(1931) A Manual of the Soara (or Sabara) Language, Madras

(11) Elwin, Verrier (1955) The Religion of an Indian Tribe, Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, Bombay, p.8

(12) Ibid, p 8-10

Sabaras in Literature

According to earlier history, there is evidence to show that the Saoras at one time were a powerful tribe. **Pliny** writes, "next to the Prasii, in the interior, came the Monedes and the Suari to whom belonged Mount Maleus on which shadows fell towards the north in winter, and to the south in summer, for six months alternately. Ganguli considered Mount Maleus as the beautiful Malyagiri in Pal Lahara, in whose vicinity Saoras are found. Verrier Elwin suggested Mahendragiri of Paralakhemundi to be Mount Maleus(1).

Ptolemy writes; "towards the Ganges River are the Sabarai, in whose country the diamond is found in great abundance; their towns are Tasopion and Karikardama (2). Cunningham observes that it places the Saoras to the south-west of the Gangetic delta and at a short distance from the sea-coast(3). Yule considers that the Saoras must have been further north in Dosarene, towards the territory of Sambalpur which produced the finest diamonds in the world (4). Lassen thought that Karikardama was somewhere in Singbhum so also Oldham suggested that in the first centuries of the Christian era, the Saoras occupied the inland hill and jungle country to the south and south east of what is now the Ranchi District (5).

Cunningham writes; "the native notices of the Saoras ascend to a much earlier period". Although the hymns of the **Rigveda** do not mention them clearly, they have a great deal to say about the Dasyus who are identified by S. C. Roy with the great Kol race (6&7). He further says; "the Mundas and other allied tribes appear to have waged wars on equal terms with their Aryan opponents. At the end the Aryans conquered the older inhabitants of the land and in the first explicit reference to the Saoras, in the **Aitareya Brahmana** they were classed with such Dasyu tribes as the Andhras, Pulindas, Pundras and Mutibas and living as outcastes on the fringe of the

Aryan settlements. This places the Saoras in trans-Vindhyan India about 800 B.C".(8)

The **Aitareya Brahmana** has traditionally accounted the origin of Sabaras and other similar tribes. It describes the Saoras as the descendants of the elder sons of Visvamitra, who were cursed by their father for an act of disobedience, and this epitomizes the general attitude of the Hindu classical writers towards the 'aboriginals'. The curse was to become the progeny of the most abject races such as the Andhras, the Pundras, the Sabaras, the Pulindas and the Mutibas(9). According to Hunter, the Saoras appear in very early Sanskrit writings and are spoken of by them with even more than usual detestation. As the Sudras or aboriginal tribes, who had been subdued into the servile caste of the Aryan Commonwealth, sprung from the feet of Brahma, so the Sabara and other forest races, who successfully withstood the invaders, proceeded from the sweat of a cow. They were goblins, they were devils, they were raw-eaters, they were man-eaters, and the Vishnu Purana has concentrated the national antipathy towards them in its picture of a dwarfish race, with flat noses and a skin the colour of a charred stake. Another sacred text assures us that they were as black as crows, with tawny hair, red eyes, a chin jutting out, short arms and legs, and the typical flat nose. A third Sanskrit sage adds a protuberant belly, drooping ears and an ogre mouth. They seem to have made their individuality very strongly felt in ancient India. The beginning of their territory long marked the last point of the Aryan advance. They are often spoken of as border tribes, who resisted the Sanskrit invaders scattered their armies and earned for themselves the name of the "terrible Saoras" (10).

Some of the Saora references in the **Mahabharata** reflect this attitude. The origin of the Saoras is traced to the cow of Vasishtha Nandini, which was desired by Viswamitra, King of Kanyakubja (Kanauj). He offered the owner an arbuda, or ten crores of his own kine, or even his kingdom itself, in exchange, but in vain. He then tried to take the cow by force. To prevent this from her tari, she began to rain showers of burning coals all round. The cow attacked Visvamitra's troops; from her tail she brought forth Pahlavas, from

her udders Dravidas and Sakas, from her vagina Yavanas, from her dung Sabaras, from her urine Kanchis, from the froth of her mouth Paundras, Yavanas, Simhalas, Barbaras, Vasas, Chivukas, Pulindas, Chinas, Hunas, Keralas and numerous other Mlechchas (11). This army routed the soldiers of Visvamura. This is the reading of the Calcutta text, and it suggests a link between the Saoras and the Kanchis, people of Conjeevaram in the south, the one originating from dung, the other from urine. But in the text published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute the Sabaras are associated with the Sakas, a northern people. The attitude of the ruling race, however, is clear; the Saoras can be used as mercenaries, but they are not fit, in view of their birth from dung, to be admitted into Aryan society. As per P.C.Roy's version Elwin has interpreted it.

The above description of the cow when placed on map of India with the head facing to north, the distribution of the tribes as said above in the Indian continent condition stands true to the geography.

The most famous of the epic references to the Saoras is that connected with Lord Ramachandra. They are all ultimately derive from Valmiki's Ramayana where, in Book III, Canto 74, it reads how Lord Rama and Lakshman, in the course of their search for Sita, came to the banks of lake or river, Pampa, lying to the west of 'Rishyamukha's wood-crowned height', where an aged ascetic Savari had made her home. Before her time the hermitae was occupied by Matanga and other rishis, and the neighbouring forest renamed after Matanga. When she knew that her visitors were on the way, Savari collected the fruits for which the place was famous and offered them to Rama for his comfort. She introduced Rama the hermitage saying, 'See the charming great forest abounding in flowers and fruit, resembling a bank of clouds, filled with all sorts of deer and birds; this is famed on earth as Matanga's forest'. Rama then gave her permission to depart from this world. In the presence of the two brothers, Savari went into a fire and ascended into the heavens while all the sky was lighted by her glory(12).

It is said that Valmiki introduced the character of Savari for the reason, a clue as to what tribes were then inhabiting the Forest of Dandaka, and she has no real bearing on the story and the incident

does not advance the plot in any way. Ramadas rather optimistically believes that it is from the Saora language that we may discover the real meaning of some of the names in the Ramayana. Thus he derived the name of Lanka, the Rawan's capital, from the Saora lankan, meaning tall, high or above, which in most cases described the characteristics of the city of Lanka on the Trikuta. Similarly, he suggests that the low-lying Janasthana is derived from the Saora jaitan means below. The Forest of Dandaka itself, which was known for its 'lucid pools, floods and lakes, beautiful stream from their parent hills' does not mean the Forest of King Danda, instead it is 'full of water', from the Saora word for water dan or dak, repeated twice for emphasis. But these views have been controverted by Ambika Prasad, who points out for example, that Lanka really means 'white' and that the name refers to the shining white buildings of the city(13).

Ramadas had also made an ingenious attempt to identify the Vanars of the Ramayana with the Hill Saoras. Both Vanars and Saoras are afraid of strangers; both delight in rivalry; both love alcoholic refreshment; both enjoy a younger brother to marry an elder brother's widow; both drink from leaf-cups. More convincing is the point that while the Vanarmen had tails, the women apparently did not have 'this appendage'. This thus suggestive that the 'monkey-hosts' of Sugriva were none other than the Arsi (monkey) Saoras with their long-tailed loin-cloth. 'Since the Vanars of the Ramayana resemble in dress, customs and manners the Saoras of today and many of the names of persons, places and objects existing between the Ganges and Lanka are of Saora origin, it is clear that Sugriva and his men were Saoras or of tribes allied to them(14 & 15).

To this we may add the very high place which 'Ramma' has in Saora mythology, though obviously Ramadas's identifications can be no more than conjectural.

According to Griffths, the story of Savari is told and exist today in many different forms. The Kols of Middle India regard her as their mother; children are born in answer to her prayers; by her merit they are clothed and fed. The Kol tradition differs in many

particulars from the story in the Ramayana. Rama, Lakshman and Sita were together in exile in the forest and one day when they were very hungry they met 'Shavari' who fed them with wild plums. After this she used to gather the fruits daily for her divine visitors, but one day she forgot what she was doing and as she picked them she took a bite from each before dropping it into her basket. When she returned home, Lord Rama asked her for the plums, but when she realized what she had done, she was ashamed to offer them to him. But he pressed her to do so, and in spite of the fact that they were half eaten, Sita and Lord Rama enjoyed them. But Lakshman refused to touch them-for to do so was to eat the 'leavings' of an aboriginal and as a result he was struck down by an arrow and only recovered when he changed his mind. Lord Rama was so pleased with the woman's devotion that when he left her home, he gave her the boon that she should have many descendants and that they should never lack for food and clothing(16).

Other Kol stories say that Shivari or Sheori was a devotee of Bhagavan, who is sometimes called Siva and sometimes Krishna. She used to follow her lord wherever he went, gathered wild plums for him, and spread large leaves for his couch in the forest. According to the Kols, Shivari's hermitage was near the modern Seori-Narayan, not far from Raipur(17).

Other passages are equally derogatory in tone. 'He (Siva) assumes the form also of men and women, pretas and pisachas, Kiratas and Sabaras and of all aquatic animals'- Saoras are placed between goblins and fishes. Janamejaya, son of Parikshit, is reported as saying that wretches like himself had forfeited all claim to the respect of the world and after death would have to dwell in hell like Pulindas and Sabaras(18).

But in other passages there is a change of attitude. When Mandhatri asks what duties should be performed by a number of peoples, of whom the Saoras are one, who have sprung from the four main castes who reside in the domain of the Aryan kings, Indra replies: "All the robber

tribes should serve their parents, their preceptors and other seniors and recluses living in the woods. All the robber tribes should also serve their kings. The duties inculcated in the Vedas should also be followed by them. They should perform sacrifice in honour of the Pitris (manes), dig wells, give water to thirsty travellers, give away beds and make other reasonable presents to Brahmins. In this passage there appears to be recognition of the Saoras as of the same blood as the ruling race, for they are derived from one of the four castes, even though they are degraded because they have become a robber tribe. It is the King's duty to reclaim them by teaching them the laws of the land and the ideals of piety(19).

Mr.Saurindranath Roy suggests that this change of attitude may have been due to the influence of Buddhism or to a missionary zeal on the part of the rulers to Hinduize the tribal people as well as the foreign settlers in the country, refusing to make any distinction between them.

Another passage which refers to the Saoras in friendly terms is that which places a Sabaralaya, a residence of Saoras, in the northern region inhabited by Mlechchas. A Brahmin named Gautama belonging to the middle country went to this region and reached a village which was peopled by Dasyus. He was kindly received by one of them who was wealthy, truthful and munificent. The house of this Dasyu is described in the text as a Sabaralaya, and we gather that the village was a colony of Saoras who lived by hunting birds, their chief weapons being bows and arrows. They were sufficiently well-to-do to present Gautama with new clothes and on his arrival he was offered and accepted the hand of a widowed girl, whose husband had recently died(20).

According to **Markandeya Purana**, the Parna-Sabaras were among the people who lived in the right fore-foot (of the Tortoise)(21). The Sabaras were also mentioned along with the Pulindas in the same work as living in the southern regions. The **Matsya Purana** includes the Sabaras also among the daksina-patha-janapadas (southern countries)(22).

The Sauri of Pliny and the Sabarae of Ptolemy were identified by Cunningham with the Sabaras or Suars, a wild race of cultivators who live in the jungles without any inhabitation. They may be said in general to have occupied the central parts of India. But they have left their relics in other provinces as well. Cunningham identified the famous place of pilgrimage, Savari Narayan, lying on the high road from Bilaspur to Jagannath, about thirty five miles to the south-west of Bilaspur and seventy five miles north-east to Raypur, with the chief town of the Sabaras (the Sorae Nomades of the foreign writers) called **Sora Arcati regia**. The people of the locality refer the name of Savari Narayan to the Srmana Savari of the **Ramayana** mentioned above. The oldest building existing at Savari Narayan is the temple of the Sun (arka) and this was probably what the foreigners referred to when they spoke of the Arcati regia. That the temple now holds a figure of Visnu is no justification for supporting that it was a Vaisnavite temple. The existence of an original dedication to the Sun god is proved by the figure of the god being placed over the middle of the doorway(23).

The **poet Bana** tells the story of how Harsha Vardhana, immediately after his accession in A.D.607, went to search for his sister Rajya Sri in the wild forests of the Vindhyan Mountains. As he travelled across the hills, he met a Chief named Vyaghraketu, son of Sarabhaketu, and Nirghata, commander-in-chief of the Bhukampa Sabaras. 'The King made enquiries of the Sabara Chief regarding Rajya Sri; he replied that no woman answering to the description given by the King was known to have been seen in his jungles, but promised to make vigorous efforts for her discovery. He suggested that she might have taken refuge in a hermitage and guided the King thither. Although the names seem to be fictitious-the Bhukampa Sabaras means the 'earthquake' Sabaras- the story suggests that at this time the Saoras were still powerful in the Vindhyan Hills. According to Bana, Sabaras were described to be lived in the forests of the **Vindhyas**, who killed the lions for the pearls attached to their nails(24).

Ridding wrote in his Kadambari; **Bana** opens his account of the Sabara army with a procession of fifteen unflattering similes. The Sabaras were like 'all the nights of the dark fortnight rolled into one', 'a crowd of evil deeds come together', 'a caravan of curses of the many hermits dwelling in the **Dandaka Forest'**. Their leader's name was Matanga. 'He was as the child of the Vindhya Mountains, the partial avatar of death; the born brother of wickedness, the essence of the Iron Age.' Like the trident of Durga, 'he was wet with the blood of buffaloes'-as most of his descendants still are. 'Like a summer day, he always showed a thirst for deer. Yet Bana cannot altogether withhold his admiration. Horrible as he was, he yet inspired awe by reason of his natural greatness and his form could not be surpassed. He was hard as iron.

And he was certainly good to look at. He filled the woods with beauty that streamed from him sombre as dark lotuses, like the water of Yamuna; he had thick locsk curled at the ends and hanging on his shoulders. To ward off the heat he had a swarm of bees which flew above him like a peacock-feather parasol. Yet he bore the marks of his profession; his shoulders were rough with scars from keen weapons often used to make blood-offerings to Kali; his chest was scarred 'by constant and ceaseless fatigue'. He was surrounded by hounds whose throats were covered with strings of cowries(25).

'Ah, he says, 'the life of these men is full of folly, and their career is blamed by the good. For their one religion is offering human flesh to Durga; their meat, mead and so forth, is a meal loathed by the good; their exercise in the chase; their shastra is the cry of the jackal; their teachers of good and evil are owls; their knowledge is skill in birds; their bosom friends are dogs; their kingdom is in deserted woods; their feast is a drinking bout; their friends are the bows that work cruel deeds; and arrows, with their heads smeared, like snakes, with poison, are their helpers; their song is what draws on bewildered deer; their wives are the wives of others taken captive; their dwelling is with savage tigers; their worship of the gods is with the blood of beasts, their sacrifice with flesh, their livelihood by theft; the snake's hood is their ornament; their cosmetic, elephants' ichor; and the very

wood wherein they dwell is utterly destroyed root and branch.'(26) The love of spirituous liquor, animal-sacrifice, marriage by capture, the love of dogs, axe-cultivation still exist in Sabar society(27).

There is some evidence that the Saoras were not only a robber tribe, but well organized to arms, There is a reference to the 'terrible Saoras' created by Vasishtha's cow who caused great carnage among the troops of Visvamitra. Cunningham considered that the Saoras were among the seven tribes of Dasyus inhabiting the mountains, the Utsavansanketas, who were conquered by the Pandavas. Among those vanquished by Saineya, Krishna's charioteer, were the Kambojas, Sakas, Sabaras, Kiratas and Varvaras; on this occasion the earth was covered with the helmets and shaven and bearded heads of the Dasyus.

It is not easy to draw any conclusion from the references in the **Mahabharata** about the location of the Saoras in early times. Sometimes the name Sabara occurs in association with northern, sometimes with southern tribes. In one passage they are definitely described as a southern people.

"I shall now, O son of Kunti, speak to you about the sinful creatures of the earth. Listen to me. These men, O King, are born in the southern region and are called Andhrakas, Guhas, Pulindas, Sabaras, Chuchukas, Madrakas. Those that are born in the northern regional shall also mention. They are Yavvanas, Kambojas, Gandharas, Kiratas and Barbaras. All of them, O sire, are sinful and move on the earth characterized by practices similar to that of Chandalas, ravens and vultures. In the Krita (Golden) Age they were nowhere on the earth."(28)

Two other references to the origin of the Saoras may be given. In the first we read:

The Mekalas, the Dravidas, the Lathas, the Paundras, the Konwasiras, the Saundikas (wine-settlers), the Darvas, the Chauras, the Sabaras, the Kiratas, the Yavanas, and numerous other tribes of Kshattriyas have become degraded to the status of Sudras through

the wrath of the Brahmanas(29).

Then some of the Kshattriyas afflicted with the terror of Jamadagni's son, entered mountain fastnesses, like deer afflicted by the lion. Of them that were unable, through fear of Rama (that is, Rama of the axe, Jamadagni's son) to discharge the duties ordained for their order, the progeny became Vrishalas (Sudras) owing to their inability to find Brahmanas. In this way the Dravidas and Abhiras and Pundras together with the Sabaras became Vrishalas, though these men had Kshattriya duties assigned to them(30).

During the first thousand years of the modern era, we have only a few scattered references to the Saoras. The Puranas describe them as Dakshina-patha-vasinah and Vindhyamaulika, which places them towards the south. In the period A.D.500 to 600. Amar Sinha classes the Saoras with such barbarians as Kiratas and Pulindas. **Varaha Mihara** speaks of the 'naked Sabaras and the Parna Sabaras' as Sauris and Kirnas as living in the south. Cunningham quotes Kern as holding that the Parna Sabara were 'manifestly the Phyllitae of Ptolemy': he explained the name as 'feeding upon leaves'.(31) But Cunningham suggests that since the **Juangs**, a 'cognate race', still wear leaves, it is more probable that the term means 'leaf-clad'-as late as 1886 the Saoras of Ganjam were reported as wearing leaves(32). Varaha Mihira also speaks of the 'Sabara savages' and the 'savage Sabaras and Pulindas'.(33)

The **Natya-Sutra**, attributed to **Bharata Mun**i of the sixth century A.D., refers to the Saoras as charcoal-burners, and lays down the rule that when they or other barbarians such as the Odras are represented on the stage, they should be made to talk vibhasa, which probably means that they were to use a rough dialect flavoured with tribal words(34).

Though many of the Saoras are wild and savage enough, they are not altogether unattractive in their simplicity. A Saora messenger appears, 'bow in hand, with his hair tied up in a knot behind with a creeper, black, and wearing a loin-cincure of bhilwan leaves(35).

Other Saoras are 'adorned with peacock's feathers and elephant's teeth, clothed in tiger's skins and living on the flesh of deer(36). The palace of the Saora Chief Ekakikesarin is 'crowded with Saoras, having its high walls covered with the tusks of elephants, adorned with tiger skins; in which the women had for garments the tails of peacocks, for necklaces strings of gunja fruit and for perfume the ichor that flows from the forehead of elephants(37). Saora women dance 'delighted' at a great feast.

The ruling Saoras are wealthy and are accepted on equal terms by other Kings. The Saora King, Mayavatu, is able to entertain a visiting host, 'giving them all splendid baths, unguents, food, arms and beds'. **King Amaradatta** and his son camp in his palace at Kanchanapura and spend an agreeable day there, with 'song, music and dancing'(38).

And finally, Mrigankadatta says to the Saora King Mayavatu, "When the Creator made you here, he infused into your composition qualities borrowed from your surroundings, the firmness of the Vindhya hills, the courage of the tigers, and the warm attachment to friends of the forest lotuses"(39).

The Saora King in Jimutavahana's story is merciful and intelligent; he goes to find pearls on the heads of elephants and on the way meets an equisite maiden 'like the digit of the moon resting in the lap of an autumn cloud'; she is riding on a lion. He at once thinks of his friend, Vasudatta, goes to fetch him, takes him to the Himalayas, and arranges his marriage. Here we have an important Hindu of good family, son of a rich merchant, cherishing the friendship of a tribal Chief. Indeed he considers that he has attained all that the heart could wish in having Manovati for a wife and the Saora prince for a friend. It is interesting to note the effect of this friendship on the Saora; he spent most of his time with Vasudatta, finding that he took less pleasure in dwelling in his own country than he formerly did(40).

The **King of Vatsa** also owed much to a Saora who came from the mountain of the sunrise and guided him to find his wife(41).

Vishnudatta describes the husband of the wanton Saora girl, in

whose house he stayed, as performing an act of 'surprising courage, characteristic of men of mighty minds'(42).

Elwin remarked, 'The important thing about these references is that they show that, in Somadeva's time, the tribal peoples were regarded with respect and even affection; there is indeed a certain sentimentalizing of them, a Rousseau-like attitude that there may be something to be said for the noble savage and his free life of skins and leaves and feathers'(43).

Sabaras and Mauryan Empire:

The Sabara aid was called into requisition in the troublesome times of the foundation of the Mauryan Empire. This is evident from Visakhadatta well known drama as referred Mudrarakasa says that Raksasa, on his way to Prince Malayaketu (who summoned him on hearing the alleged plot), told Priyamvadaka, thus, "Let the chiefs that follow the Prince be informed in my name that they should proceed en route in the proposed order, now that they are nearer to Kusumapura every day - Khasa and Sabara chief should march in the var in battle array after me. Yavana chiefs should be careful to keep the centre along with Gandhara chiefs. Valiant S'aka chiefs accompanied by Huna chiefs should be in the rear. And the remaining group of chief, namely the king of Kuluta, etc. should post themselves about the person of Prince Malayaketu in the line of march".(44)

Saletore (1935) says again as to how the fact that the foreign or Mleccha Kings having helped either side during the eventful days of the establishment of the Mauryan Kingdom being thus proved beyond doubt, the question arises - How do we account for the presence of the foreign powers, especially the forces of the Kiratas and the S'baras, whom Candragupta enlisted in his service during the investment of Pataliputra?

This on analysis can be termed that the S'abara tribes who gave assistance to Candragupta Maurya was not merely adventitious, but may have been, an identity of interests between the future Emperor

and the Sabara tribes, he concluded.

The **Maha vamso** rannates that after the nine Nandas, Chanakya anointed a glorious youth by name Chandragupta, as king over all Jambudipa, born of a noble clan the Moriyas (45).

The strength of assertions of Visakhadatta and those of Manu confirmed by the statements in the **Mahabharata** it is permissible to ask whether or not there was a distinct S'abara element in the parentage of Chandragupta said Saletore.

Further, Chanakya calls Chandragupta by the name **Vrsala Maurya** (46). The term **Vrsala** seems to have had some particular significance in the code of law givers. Under that denomination were included a number of ancient tribes, as we had an occasion of explaining on the evidence of the Mahabharata and the **Code of Manu** among whom were the Kiratas and the S'abaras.

The word **Vrsala** appears thus in **Brhadharanyaka Upanisad** says, 'when the monthly illness seizes his wife..................Let no **Vrsala Vrsali** touch her (47). A Snataka was forbidden to go on journey with outcastes or with a women or with a S'udra who was evidently no other than **Vrsala**(48).

Manu pronounced the following verdict on those who dared to violate justice:- 'For divine justice, a bull (ursa); that (man) who violates it, the gods consider to be a S'udra (**Vrsala**); let him therefore, beware of violating justice'(49).

According to Saletore from the evidences so available and Chanakya pointing out Chandragupta Maurya as to **Vrsala** parentage and the substantial aid which he had received from the S'abaras and the Kiratas, who appear frequently in the drama **Kudraraksasa**, suggest that Chandragupta, though considered to be Ksatriya by virtue of his remarkable military achievements, in the wider sense of the term - may have been of S'abara or Kirata (i.e. Sudra) stock not only from his mother's side, as is admitted, but also from his

parental line, about which, however, it must be confessed, direct evidence is not forthcoming in history.

Similarly, Saletore (1935) gave the blood relationship of Gupta royal house, Nisadas with Sabara tribe(50). The reasons to place Dasa or Kaivartas as S'baras do not appear convincing at this stage.

The **Brhatsamhita** also confirms the statements in **Ramayana** that Sabaras the wicked Dasyus, were found in southern region of Central India who were given over to the practice of evil customs (51). But the same epics refers to the pious S'abara figure to Sabari in Rishi Matangas abode (52).

In the Brhatsamhita it continues that the western and south-eastern homes of the Sabaras and the Nisadas together with the habitat of a particular branch of Sabara called Nagna-parna-Sabars, which reads as follows:

Vrsanalikeracarmadvipa Vindhyanta-vasinah-tripuri |
s'mas' radhara Hemakutya Vyalagriva Mahagrivah ||
Kiskindha-kanthakasthala Nisada-rastrani purika Das'arnah|
saha Nagna-parna-S'abaraiah-as'lesadhyaitrike des'ah|| (53)

The same author couples the Sabaras with the Vangas, the Suhmas, the Kalinga, the Bahlikas, the S'akas, the Yavanas, the Maghadas, and the people of Pragjytissa, Cina and Kamboja (54).

The Nagna-Parna-Sabaras as said above were not naked leaf-eating S'abaras interpreted by Kern and Fleet (55), but were leaf-wearing Sa'baras as Gerini rightly pointed out (56).

Sabari-Narayana or Serori-Narayana:

Russel and Hira Lal also refer to the story of Savari, which they attribute to 'local tradition'. Their version traces the origin of the Saoras 'to the celebrated Seori of the Ramayana, who is supposed to

have lived somewhere near the present Seori-Narayan in the Bilaspur district and to have given her name to this place. Ramachandra in his wanderings met her, ate the plums which she had gathered for him after tasting each one herself, and out of regard for her devotion permitted her name to precede his own of Narayan in that given to the locality. It will be noted that in this version of the story the Saora woman tastes the plums as an act of devotion, presumably to see if they are sufficiently ripe, not from forgetfulness. The Saoras living in this area still call themselves Seori-Narayan Saoras. The Bilaspur Gazetteer (1910) says that Seori-Narayana gets its name from the hermit Sawar who worshipped Jaganath there(57).

The claim of Seori-Narayan to be the scene of this incident is not undisputed. The people of Sirpur, to the north-east of Rajim and forty miles lower down the right bank of the Mahanadi, claim that the anchoret Savari offered her plums to Rama. The Ramayana itself describes the Pampa lake or river, on whose banks Savari lived, as being to the west of 'Rishyamukha's wood-crowned height'. But if Sirpur was the site of Savari's hermitage, then the Mahanadi must be identified with the Pampa, and the hills to the east with the Rishyamukha Mountain, and this is improbable. Pargiter places Pampa as far west as Sholapur, and S.N.Roy declares that Matanga's hermitage was in the neighbourhood of Nasik(57). The matter can hardly be concluded with certainty, but the general modern tradition is that Savari lived somewhere in what is now Chattisgarh and it is probable that the Panchapsaras like, where Rama spent ten years of his exile, was in this region(58). It is of much significance, says Mazumdar, that 'so late as the eight century A.D. Pallavamalla of South India in recording his military expedition against Udayana-the ruler of this tract-has called this country the land of the Sabaras'.

Swiris (of Ayodhya) Azimgarh and Ghazipur:

According to Garrick, Swiris or Saoras once extended as far as the present districts of Azimgarh and Ghazipur near the modern town of Ghazipur indeed there still exist ruins which are supposed to mark the site of an ancient Swiri town and in and around Vaidyanath

Garrick discovered many remains to which he attributed a Swirani origin. He records, they were Solar Race and their progenitor was Sabaran. Their ancient capital, long before the time of Rama, was Ayodhya, but in the reign of the fourth Swiri King Sainjith it was removed to Vrithavr, near Kasiji, in which was the royal palace. In this King's reign and in that of his successors many fortresses and castles were built and the races who inhabited them were called Swiris by all. When **king Purmedh**, whose family is fabled to have belonged to the Silver Age, ascended the throne, great were the rejoicings of the Cow and the Brahmin; old and young, rich and poor, were contented and happy(60).

Brighu, Ragh and Nag-Vansa and Swiris (Sabaras) in Ayodhya:

Again Garrick wrote, 'In the meantime other powerful tribes became envious, and the three races of Bhrighu, Raghu and Nag entered that kingdom very humbly and became the Swiris' servants. It is related that some time after the advent of these three tribes into Swirani territory, a tributary king died, on which there was a large gathering of people, and these vansas slew the Swiris by a stratagem which their menial capacity greatly facilitated, namely, when their masters (the Swiris) called for sherbet, these foreigners mixed a herbaceous poison, *yhr*, in the beverage, on drinking which large numbers of the Swiri-vansa died instantly. Then the Swiris, being considerably weakened, and thus affording an easy chance of conquest, an attack was made by the Bhrighu-vansa, Raghu-vansa and Nag-vansa conjointly, in which the three races were victorious, and in this manner the kingdom passed from the race of Swiri, and the descendants of Bhrighu (contrary to custom) began to reign in their stead. The few Swiris who escaped from this great war fled to the woods and lived in concealment, some taking refuge in mountain-caves, others going on durjatra, or distant sacred places of pilgrimage unknown to the three tribes, who entered their kingdom as cupbearers and usurped their throne'(61).

Garrick considers that this event may be assigned to some time in the first 225 years of the present era; this means that the people

who were once the rulers of the vast tract of country before named, of which they are the aborigines, have been homeless wanderers for nearly 2000 years.

Sabara chief Tarangatama in Kannada literature of Abhinava Pampa:

The Kannada writer Abhinava Pampa mentions about the havoc which the Sabaras caused to the people. He calls the Sabara leader Tarangatama, king of the great Mleccha-desa, with his capital at Ardhapura, north of Dhanadacala and south of Vijayardhacala. His encampment (sibira) was Mayuramale. He plundered in every direction the territory of king Janaka including Kapota, Kamboja, etc. and caused such great havoc that the king had at last to seek the aid of Rama and Laksmana. In the battle the Sabara leader was of course defeated(62).

Kharia traditional story and Sabaras:

There is an interesting link between the Saoras and the Lord Jagannath is found in a Kharia tribe tradition of Mayugbhanj. Out of the primeval egg, from which came the ancestors of the Bhanja Kings, the first Purans and the first Brahmana Kharias, came also the ancestor of Jara Saora. The present descendants of Jara Saora are the Brahmana Kharias, who have the privilege of placing of silken cloth over the sacred car of Jagannath at the Rath-jatra festival at the capital of Mayurbhanj, just as the descendants of Vishwabasu Saora do at Puri. Jara is the name of an old hunter in the Mahabharata, who shot Krishna in the forest. Russell and Hira Lal say that this Jara was himself a Saora, the first ancestor of the tribe, and that it was in the form of a deer that he shot Krishna. (63)

The word Jara resembles Jadu, or jungly, which is the name of one of the divisions of the Hill Saoras, and in fact Maltby gives it with this spelling in his early Manual of the Ganjam District. Risley says that the Saoras of the Orissa Tributary States were divided into four branches-Bendkar, Parira, Jharua and Palli, and it may be that

Jharua is another variant of the same name. Roy suggests that it will not be unreasonable to infer that the Hill Kharias who claim to have been intimately associated or connected with the Jara-Saoras may have found their way from their original home in some part of the central hill belt of India by the same route as the Saoras of the Ganjam district, and thus reached the Mayurbhanj hills which became the centre of their subsequent dispersion(64).

The Sabaras and Musahar, Bhuiyas and Cheros tribe:

Another tribe whose traditions appear to connect them with the Saoras is the Musahar, which also has associations with the Bhuiyas and Cheros. Nelson recorded the following legend. "Arjuna had retired to the forest to meditate on the 108 names of Siva, and to test him the god caused a wild boar to run before him. But Arjuna first finished his devotions and then seized his bow and arrow and gave chase to the animal which led him to a hermit's hut. Here Siva and Parvati had assumed the disguise of a Saora and his wife. Arjuna and the Saora both commenced pursuing the boar and when the animal had been hunted down and killed, a contention arose as to who had the right claim to it. It was agreed that the matter should be decided next day by a wrestling match. Arjuna wrestled with the disguised god all the day till sundown, when he pleaded that he must go and repeat his evening devotions, to which his antagonist consented. In the course of these Arjuna realized who the Saora really was and, returning to the hut, threw himself at the feet of his divine antagonist and received his blessings. Now in this hermitage there was a maiden of unknown parentage whom the hermit cherished as a daughter. She had just completed her period and after bathing returned to the hut where she found Siva and Parvati in their Saora disguise. The eye of the god fell on her. From the glance of that eye she became pregnant, and gave birth in due course to twins, one a male and the other a female, who bore an exact resemblance to the Saora and his wife whom she had seen in the hermitage. The hermit, judging from the uncouth features and dark complexion of the babies that she had been guilty of unchastity with some wild man of the woods, sent her out of his hermitage. From the two children whom

she had borne sprang the Musahar tribe."(65)

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Indian History and Sabaras

The Sabaras from Inscriptions:

A **Korni copper plate grant** of Anantavarma Choda Ganga tells that Karmavarna, the founder of the Kalinga Ganga dynasty, defeated and killed the previous ruler Sabaraditiya, a Sabara Chief somewhere to the east of Mount Mahendra, about A.D.720(1). In the **Udayendiram plates** of the twenty-first year of the reign of the Pallava King Nandivarman Pallavamalla, he is said to have defeated the Saora King Udayana and captured his mirror banner made of peacock feathers. This was about A.D.736(2).

Another Saora Chief is mentioned in the Sanskrit and Kanarese prasasti of the **Western Ganga Chief** Marasimha II, who was a subordinate of the **Rashtrakuta King** Krishna III and placed Indra IV on the throne. This inscription is at Sravana Belgola in Mysore and states that Narasimha II (963-74) defeated a Saora Chief named Naraga(3). The **Naihati grant** of Vellasena dated about 1100 declares that the children of the Kings who were Vellasena's enemies were reduced to living in the houses of Saoras; this gives us Saoras in the Burdwan District of Bengal(4). A rock inscription of the time of Bhojavarman (A.D.1300) in the Ajayaarh Fort records that Ananda the Governor subdued the wild tribes of Bhillas, Sabaras and Pulindas(5). A Khadavada inscription dating rom Gyasahi of Mandu, A.D. 1484, declared that one of Mandu's military officers put down a Saora rebellion at Khidavada on the Chamanvati(6).

The only inscription, however, from the area now populated by the Hill Saoras occurs in the Kurmesvara temple at Sri-Kurmam in the Srikakulam district. This records that the famous Vaisnava scholar Narahari-tirtha had protected the people of Kalinga and

defended the temple against an attack by the wild Saoras(7). This was some time in the latter part of the thirteenth century. This may be the solidarity given by Eastern Gangas to Sabaras of Kalinga.

Sabaras in History:

Kharavela, the Kalinga Emperor and Sabaras

N.K.Sahu wrote, "Last but not the least in the social structure were the Sudras who were of great help to the cultivators in the farms, to the traders in the field of trade and to the artisans in the factories. They worked hard as labourers to augment production and prosperity of the country with bare but regular subsistence. The aboriginal people in the hilly regions were probably classed among the Sudras and they constituted an important elements in the army of Kalinga. The Sabaras and the Pulindas fought valiantly in the army of Kalinga at the Kuruksetra battle, while the Atavi people fought for the defence of Kalinga in the famous Kalinga war of Ashoka. The Hathigumpha inscription reveals that Kharavela organised the military resources of the territory of the Vidyadharas and with the help of the army of that land crushed the Rathikas and the Bhojakas in his 4th regnal year. Thus the tribal people constituted the strength of Kalinga through ages and the Hathigumpha inscription rightly calls their territory as 'Ahatapuvam' meaning 'never conquered in the past".(8) The Atavi people can be taken to Sabaras of Kalinga safely.

As it looks from the records of Chola Kulotunga I, he conquered Kalinga and in the great Tamil epic of Kalingattupparani it is mentioned of people dwelling on hills as Jains and Budhists; the Chola army did a great massacre to the Kalinga inhabitants and though it does not mention of any tribe name of 'Sabara' still the whole activity of the army of Chola points it out to the Sabaras of Kalinga.(9)

Saluva Nrisimha of Vijayanagara and Sabara principality:

There seems to have been a Sabara principality even in the times of Vijayanagara monarch Saluva Nrisimha. At the request of the people called Kutavacalendratatavasi, Saluva Nrisimha invaded Nagamangala. Leaving a garrison there, he proceeded to conquer Prthugiri. Here he was attacked by a Sabara leader. It may be supposed that the Sabara leader whom aluva Nrisimha conquered was one of the Dasyu chiefs near abouts Candragutti. This region was held by the Dasyu Nayakas from Keladi Basava Raja's Sivatattvaratnakara(10).

Krsna Devaraya and Sabara:

The Keladi Nrpati Vijaya narrates that once Krsna Deva Raya heard that the Sabaras were causing great havoc in his Empire. He summoned Sadasiva Raya Nayaka, ordered an efficient army to be got ready, and commanded him to destroy the enemies, having honoured him with the tambulam (i.e.betel leaf and nut)(11).

The Sabaras certainly were agents of turmoil. But they were not so barbarous as not to come within the civilizing influence around them. In the age of the epics itself, a certain amount of dignity seems to have been attached to the name Sabara.

In the Pampa Ramayana, Rudra disguising himself as a Sabara, and accompanied by Parvati, Guha, and others, pursuing Mukadanava, who had assumed the form of a boar. The same work relates in an upakathe of Vasubhuti being born as a Sabara under the name of Kalajangha in the Sardulasya forest. A Sabara messenger is introduced in the same work as hurrying with a report that a large elephant had broken loose in the royal garden of king Janaka(12).

The turbulent Sabara leader who caused great havoc to the Brahmans of Tagare-nad, as reported in an epigraph dated A.D.972 already cited, was a Sabara minister(Sabara Pradhana) as his birudu signifies. His other titles were Narakasura and a most formidable opponent equal to Kala and Sisupala(13).

Suirs (Sabaras) of Shahabad and their conquest on Cheros:

Another tradition, however, makes the Saoras conquerors. This ascribes to them the conquest of the Cheros, and their expulsion from the plateau of Shahabad, about A.D.500. According to Risley, a number of ancient monuments in the Shahabad district are still put down to the Sabaras or Suirs, who are supposed to have been driven south by the inroad of Rajputs under the Bhojpur chief, which made an end of their rule(14).

Sabaras and Haihaya dynasty and Gonds of Balaghat and Bhandarai:

Cunningham writes; "the whole of the plain country of Chhattisgarh formerly belonged to the **Haihaya princes**, while the hilly districts of Balaghat and Bhandara were occupied by the **Gonds.** The jungly districts to the north and east of the Mahanadi river would appear to have been occupied by the Baigas and Sabaras. Then the Haihayas, following the course of the Narbada, first displaced the Sabaras in Mandla (where the Baigas still remain) and the Gonds in Balaghat, and extended their sway over the plain of Chhatisgarh. But the Sabaras and Gonds must still have held all the more jungly tracts to the south-east and south-west as tributaries of the Haihayas, until in the lapse of time the Gonds conquered Mandla from the degenerate Haihayas and greatly extended their kingdom. That the domination of the Haihayas on the Narbada cannot lay claim to a greater antiquity than the middle of the third century A.D."(15)

The Kosala rulers as lords of Magadha with Sabara lineage:

The **Kosala rulers** were **lords of Magadha.** According to the **Rajim copper-plate** inscription of the Mahasiva Tivarajaja, Tivara Deva was the adopted son of Nanna Deva whose grand-father was Udayana of the Sabara lineage.(16)

Pallavas and Sabara lineage:

The **Pallavas** themselves seem to have had some Sabara blood in their veins. Mukunti Pallava, son of Mahadeva by a girl of the wild mountain tribe called the Censuaras (i.e. the Cen-Sabaras)(17) was supposed to have been the founder of the Pallava line with his capital at Dharanikota. These Censuaras were the same as the modern Cencu, Cenju or Irala tribes found in the Goomsoor wilds, and westward of Ahobalam, Srisailam, as well as in the North and South Arcot districts. They are also called Villiyans or bowmen. The males put on skins, and women stitched leaves. They live on the rice of the bamboo. They are also found near Pulicat, twenty four miles north of Madras along the sea, under the name of Centsus(18).

The history of the agrahara Bellnr alias Visnuvardhana-caturvedimangalam, contains some pleasant notices of Sabaras who came within the pale of civilization. The epigraph which gives us this information relates that several Srivaisnava scholars in that agrahara village had a large number of disciples both among Brahmans and non-Brahmans. A few of their descendants, still live in that village. One of the leaders of this village was Prativadi-bhayankaram (A Terror to hostile Disputants) Anna, a disciple of Manavalamahamuni, the great Srinivaisnava teacher and author who flourished in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. One of the ancestors of the villagers then living, named Vellurappa or Annangaracarya, came from Kanci and settled in that village some 120 years ago. On hearing that some of his Sabara disciples were addicted to beef, he became disgusted and made up his mind to leave the place for Melkote. Thereupon the Sabaras swore on his foot-prints that they would give up their wild habits, and entreated him to remain. The foot-prints are still pointed out on a rock on the Cikka-Urukala Gudda to the west under the name Gurugala-pada (the Guru's feet)(19).

Sarava relations in Ceylon:

The Matharas rule dynasty in Kalinga is placed between 4th nd 5th century A.D. Their capital was known as Simhapura according

to their inscriptions (20). From Ceylonese chronicles indicate that a certain Simhabahumi granted from Kalinga and established a kingdom there, after which there was close association between the royal families of Ceylon and Kalinga. The Matharas were Bhagavatism and became worshippers of the God Narayana, but from Ceylonese records it is apparent that they also followed Buddhism. One thing that should not be overlooked is the aboriginal influence of the Sabaras or the Pulindas on the religious spheres of Kalinga and Ceylon. V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar in his paper (21) on “South India and Ceylon” writes: “there is still a village near Tatnapur (in Ceylon) named Havaragama, probably Sabaragrama, which reminds of a Sabara settlement. According to the Markandeya Purana, the Sabaras and the Pulindas were forest tribes in south India. This points out to a migration of these tribes from South India. Further, the Mahavamsa explains the origin of the Pulindas as rising out of the two children of Vijaya by Yakkhini Kubeni. It sounds to reason to take that the Veddhas of modern Ceylon are akin to these ancient tribes of Sabaras and Pulindas of South India”(22).

When the Eastern Gangas conquered the area south of the Mahendragiri mountain shortly before 500 A.D., they acknowledged a deity of the Saora tribe on the Mahendragiri under the name Siva-Gokarnasvamin as the tutelar deity of the family (ista-devata). This tradition has been preserved for centuries. In an inscription of the early 12th century it is mentioned that the founder of the dynasty, Kamarnava, after his arrival in Kalinga, climbed up the Mahendragiri and worshipped Gokarnasvamin. “Out of grace (prasadat) the god bestowed on Kamarnava all symbols of kingship (samrajya-cihna) who descended (avatirya) from the mountain, killed the chief of the Sabara tribe (Sabarditya) and conquered Kalinga”.(23)

The most famous svayambhu linga worshipped in Orissa is the Lingaraja in Bhubaneswar, whose temple was built in the eleventh century (24). The temple has two classes of priests: Brahmins and a class called Badus who are ranked as sudras and said to be of tribal origin(25).

These Badus are similar to Boyas of Simhachal temple, who are also Sabaras which can be seen from Manual, Ganjam. Only Badus are allowed to bathe the Lingaraja and to adorn him and at the times of festivals when the god, represented by his calanti pratima, leaves the temple only Badus may carry this movable image. Without them, it is said, the god "cannot move one step".

The Badus are described by the legend as tribals (sabaras) who originally inhabited the place and worshipped the linga under the tree(26).

Western Ganga King Marasingha Permmanadi and Sabara chief Naraga:

In the reign of the **Ganga king Satyavakya Permmanadi** (A.D.972), the Brahmans of Tagare-nad went on a mission to Marasingha Permmanadi, who ruled over Gangavadi. A Sabara leader called Naraga was slaying and laying waste with fire all the country round. The Brahmans approached Marasingha Permmanadi with the petition. Marasingha Permmanadi granted their petition and at his command, his soldiers slew Naraga together with his son-in-law, his children, his family, subjects and slaves.(27)

Sabara Tribesmen of Kalinga and Eastern Chalukyas

The Sabaras have been mentioned throughout the Eastern Chalukyan inscriptions. The Vengi country of Eastern Chalukyas was located to the south of Kalinga, but many wars and conflicts appeared from time to time for extending their territory against each other. The traditional Sabara country was located in Kalinga as well as in south Kalinga extending into the Eastern hills. As said earlier a great number of rulers with their civilization passed through their country. Some of the exerts of importance between the Eastern Gangas and Eastern Chalukyas have been cited in this paper with relation to Sabaras as found in some important inscriptions.

B.Venkatakrishna Rao (28) writes; "Yuddhamalla had actually

brought in the Rashtrakuta armies and those of others to install him on the throne. The other allies who rendered him assistance in this civil war against his successors appear to be Ayyapa, lord of the Nalambas and Ereyapa, king of the Western Ganga and other Rashtrakuta feudatories of the south and lastly the feudatory Sabara Chieftains of the Andhra country(29), who these Sabara feudatory chiefs were, it is difficult to guess. They were probably a tribe of the northern region ruling in the Kalinga country which was an appanage in the empire of the Eastern Chalukyas about this time or it might be that the commanders of the Eastern Ganga king, Vijrahasta I (AD 895-939) were contemptuously called the Sabara Chieftains by the proud Eastern Chalukyas". (30)

He again wrote "Vajrahasta I (AD 896-940) of Eastern Ganga was a contemporary of Chalukya Bhima I, Kollabhiganda, Ammaraja I and lived down to the middle of the reign of Chalukya Bhima II. He appears to have been a powerful tributary king in the empire of Chalukya Bhima I but to have rebelled immediately after his death, against his successor Kollabhiganda, taking advantage of the death of Chalukya Bhima I and the sudden revival of the hostilities with the Rashtrakuta king, Nityavarsha-Indra IV. (AD 912-917) (31). But this revolt proved disastrous to Kalinga once again. Kollabhiganda, as we have seen before, invaded Kalinga and conquered Vajrahasta I in a most decisive battle and captured his innumerable elephants, horses and chariots (AD 917). Vajrahasta I, never after this ignoble defeat, attempted again to rebel or to withhold his usual tributes to the Eastern Chalukya sovereign. Even though he was on the throne for six months, he is stated to have reigned over the wild country of Trikalinga for a short period of eleven months, and claimed to have reigned over the whole of the Vengimahamandala together with the kingdom of Trikalinga. Vajrahasta I would appear to have taken up the case of Yoddhamalla II, who succeeded Vikramaditya II or Bhimaraja, and fought against his rivals, notably, Chalukya Bhima II; for king Yuddhamalla II was characterized as having divided the kingdom between himself and the Sabara chieftains and the Vallabha commanders, by Chalukya Bhima II".(32)

Vajrahasta I's defeat against Chalukyan of Vengi gives the impression that the Sabara tribes had important role for Eastern Gangas, because from the prideful laughter of Eastern Chalukya saying Eastern Gangas as Sabara chieftains. Thus it can be clearly said that Sabara chieftains were the Eastern Gangas thus the Kalinga itself. In later course of time, to weaken the Eastern Gangas divided the Kalinga under the Sabara chieftains (who they were not known) and Vallabhas and himself. It is quite evident from the titles of the chieftain of Sabara societies, a hereditary position as it is today still post-fix to the name 'Gamang', which is derived from their alliance as well as partners of administration of Kalingas, during Eastern Gangas.

Moreover, the Sabara have been in the history of Kalinga and before in the plains as well as in Hill country and also south Kosala. Till date in almost all important towns of Orissa having ancient historical relevance has one street of Sabara called 'Sabara Sahi', take it in Bhubaneswar, Puri, Jeypore, B.Singhpur, and everywhere. All the ruling dynasties in Orissa had to take their assistance and thus a place for them in the capital. The Sabara existing villages in Koraput other than Gunupur area has such value.

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Sabaras in Dakshina-Kosala, Kalinga-Kongoda with relation to Purusottama Jagannath Cult

King Hastivarman was ruling Kalinga, the other side in Dakshina Kosala was ruled by Mahasiva Tivaradev of Pandu dynasty.
They were feudatory chief of Mahasudevaraja of Sarabhapura. The Rajim and Baloda plates indicate the fact that Mahasiva Tivaradeva used the title of 'Sakala Koshaladhipati'(1). Tivaradeva was Vishnu worshipper and had the pithlet of Paramavaisnava. The above grants of Tivardeva of Pandu dynasty were issued from Siripur, which is about 78 kms from Raipur towards Sambalpur. The Pandu dynasty referred to Udayana belonged to Sabara lineage(2). This has been dealt separately.

It is said that if Udayana of the Siripur inscription is identical with the Sabara king of the same name of the aforesaid king Nandivarman, then we have to presume that another Sabara king Sabaradity who was said to have been defeated on the peak of Mahendra by the first Eastern Ganga king, Kamarnava may have had some relation with Udayana and also the Pandu dynasty king of Dakshina Kosala. Pulindasena, a great chief of Kalinga-Janta(3) and a devoult worshipper of Svayambhu may also be linked with the same Sabara-lineage. His successor was taken by the court-poets of the Sailodbhava kings as belonging to the Ksatriya race, Sailodbhava by name.

It was Richard Jenkins, who discovered '**Rajim Mahatmya**' in the early decades of the 19 century, was stated by Cunningham(4). The Mahatmya records suggest the Mahanadi river bore the name of Utpalesvari, also the course of the river below its junction with river Jonk is still known by the name Citrotpala.

Rajim is few kilometers from Siripur, the Rajvoleana temple

of Rajim is well surrounded by Varaha, Narasimha, Badasinath, Vamana, Jagannath, Rajesvara and Danesvara, and two Siva-temples also Budha. It is thus concluded that the Pandu dynasty kings, may be from Tivardeva onwards used to worship Visnu in his various forms. Cunningham assigns these temples to about 5th century A.D. on archaeological grounds, so the conclusion derived by Mishra that both Sabara king of Mahendragiri defeated by Kamarnava and the Sabara king of this locality, Siripur is well established.

The **Budhistic sculptures** are found in different places of the present Chattisgarh, that is the Mahanadi inscriptions and flow areas, which is well evident in Sabarinarayana or Seorinarayana and Siripur and around others. The name Seroinarayana as has been described elsewhere in this work was a place of Sabaras well documented from Ramayana and others as well. These places attained religious importance before the advent of Pandus and the Sarabhapuria dynasties. The records of Chinese pilgrim, Hiuentsang indicates that these part of South Kosala was under the influence of the great Buddhist teacher, Nagarjuna. Hiuentsang further points out that the South Kosala king was Buddhist in religion and of noted enevolence (5). Though it is claimed that the kings worshipped Visnu and still patronised Buddhism, this can be well verified from Sirpur temple which deplicts at the 'dwar' or entrance wall the Buddha taken as one avatar along with others like matsya, Baraha and Bamana etc. The Sirpur was also one of the important centre for Budha biharas. The Sabara were both followers of Visnu and Buddhist.

It is evident from the Buguda plates, that Pulindasena, leader of Kalinga-janta worshipped the god Svyambhu, on Mahendra hill top and was bestowed with a boon that a stalwart youth would come out of a rock after it had split. It thus happened and he was named Sailodbhava, and later on him the family name followed (6). The Mahendra mount of Kalinga and Seroi-narayana of Dakshina-Kosala were two main centres of Sabara culture and pre-dominancy, even before the advent of Sailodbhavas and Panduvamsis. The Sabara

were known as Pulindas in Kalinga. The history speaks importance of Mahendra mount even before the Sailodbhavas, to the Matharas and the Gangas. Mishra wrote, " From the study of the religious history of this locality it could be concluded that the religious conditions in the countries of Daksina Kosala and Kongada were almost similar being inter linked through the agency of the aboriginal tribes, namely the Sabaras(7).

Now, if an aboriginal god, possibly made of wood, was installed on the Mahendra mountain and worshipped by the Pulindas or the aboriginal Sabaras (8) under some name in their own language, and if that was taken as the divine lord of the country of Kalinga, it is presumable that the Matharas, who were Bhagavatas, devoted to the god Narayana, might have worshipped the former according to their faith under the name of Narayana or Purusottama Narayana.

The same rastradevata of the kingdom was perhaps earlier called Narayana by the Matharas, Gokarnesvara by the Gangas and Svayambhu by the Sailodbhavas. After the Sailodbhavas, the Saivite kings, the Gangas, probably called the same deity Gokarnesvara in the form of a Siva who, according to them, was responsible for the prosperity of the royal State. Although an unknown primitive god was worshipped by the followers of Visnu, Brahma and Siva according to their faith, they did not dare change the iconographic features of the deity, which would have wounded the religious sentiment of the aboriginal tribes who formed an important part of the militia of these countries. If any image corresponding to the peculiar image-type of Jagannatha could be found in the Sabara country, we could have unhesitatingly suggested that the former was the prototype of the latter. But, in the absence of any such image, we have to seek for other data to explain the form of the three peculiar images comprising Purusottama Jagannatha and his associated, now enshrined in the temple of Puri."

As per the copper-plate inscription discovered in Terasinga (Kalahandi district), about the 4th or 5th century A.D.(9) there was a local king named Tustikara, who was a worshipper of Stambhesvari. This deity is called Bhagavati in the copper-plate grant. Since the

shape of the goddess Stambhesvari resembles a wooden pillar, corresponding to the Sabara image installed in every Sabara village, we may infer that originally a goddess, installed in the country of Gondrama inhabited by a aboriginal tribe was a subsequently worshipped by king Tustikara and after him by the Sulkis and the Bhanjas of Gondrama and Khinjalimandala respectively. The goddess possessed the Sanskritised name, Stambhesvari, given by the Brahmanas. While discussing the Hindol plate of Kulastambha, D.C.Sircar says, "Stambhesvari was the family deity of the Sulkis of Orissa"(10). According to him, the representation of the goddess was probably made out on a Stambha indicating a Sivalinga. But, according to S.N.Rajaguru, it is an aboriginal goddess which was subsequently taken by the Brahmanas. In this connection Rajaguru says, "In every village of these hill tribes we find one or two wooden pillars, small in size, and worshipped by villagers on ceremonial occasions". It is, therefore, probable that these pillar deities were named "Stambhesvari" by the Sanskrit Pandits who were mainly responsible for Aryanising these aboriginal deities. The Tantrayana, which is called "Sabari Vidya", is nothing but a transformation of the religion of the Sabaras.(11) This is a glaring example of the blending of dogmatic belief in mysticism with primitive superstition. The human sacrifice which prevailed among these hill-tribes was adopted by the Aryans who assimilated it into their own religion and called it Naramedha. All these accounts given some idea as to how the so-called Hindu religion became an admixture of heterogenous cults embodying the percepts of different tribes; in different times. In the Kalika-Purana we come across the name of the Sabaras as worshippers of the Goddess Kali. Pargiter has rightly observed, "The Aryans met with religious practice and belief among the people whom they ruled over or came into lasting contact with and have assimilated among them gradually, thus modifying their own religion to a certain extent"(12).

Folklons on Sabara tribe religious outlook:

A popular Sabara tradition says that two brothers, Rama and Bhima came to the top of the Mahendra mountain(13) and extended

as far as the Vindhyas in Central India. They worshipped a large number of gods and semi-gods(Elwin). The Sabaras worshipped Sitabinji(Sita) in Keonjhar district of Orissa in the form of a stone image in cave, believing that it was the place where her two sons Lava and Kusa were born. Again, the Linga of Madhuke Sabara at Mukhalingam was discovered by the Sabaras, which subsequently taken over by the Brahmans in the time of Gangas(14). Such innumerous examples appears still like one Sabara discovered the linga in the caves of Ramagiri, named Gupteswara. There are many siva temples around Dakshina Kosala and tri-kalinga which are still worshipped by the tribals and some have been taken over by Brahmins.

Cult transformation through time scale:

The Sabaras originally spread over a wide region as said earlier. The Brahmins when migrated to these regions, they discovered that Sabaras worshipped several gods and goddesses, and called in their language "Kitung". The new settlers did not disturb or injure the aboriginal sentiments of the aboriginal settlement; but however, they worshipped the local gods by Sanskritising their names like Stambhesvari and Svayambhu. The word 'Svayambhu' was not only used by the Brahmanical priests for Siva or Brahma, but also by the Jaino gurus for the Tirthankaras(15). Rev.Long during his visit to Orissa in 1859 made the following statement.

__The concept applied to Srayambhu of the Mahendragiri looks close and applicable to certain images found at Siripur, from the iconographic features point of view. Cunningham's view in connection with Sabari Narayana image which he attributes to features of Budha runs, "The figure inside is said to be of black stone about 3 feet high, it represents a two armed and two-legged seated human figure. The legs crossed, one hand resting on the thigh, the other below the chest held horizontally. The statu is said to be precisely that at Rajim known as Rajivalocana's, and like it is clearly Buddhist resembling the great statue of Buddha at Rajjhana and

about the same also in height; they are, however, full statues and not altorelievos. At the extremity of the Colonnade built in front of the temple, is a statue said to be of Garuda. I could not see this or examine it, there is also a statue of Hanuman. To the right of the entrance of the temple is a loose pilaster with a sculptured figure similar to the pilasters described at Siripur; this female figure is now known as the statue of Savari. The legend is that here Sabari worshipped Rama, and as a boon asked that her name should precede his; hence the name of the place Sabarnarayana (shortened to Seorinarayana) which was also later named as Savaripur.(16) "This place is within a distance of about 3 miles from the confluence of the River Jonk and the Mahanadi. This is the religious seat of the Pandus which is popularly known as Sabarinarayana."

The age to which these sculptures and temples belong to in this locality is the clue to the integration of different religions, viz. Saivism, Buddhism, Vaisnavism. But this is the history of years and years of cultural development and transformations with changes. The remnants of these religions are traceable in and around Savaripur or Siripur, the ancient capital of Panduvamsi Kings, who were known as Sakalakosaladhipati too. Mahasivagupta Balarjuna, successor of Mahasiva Tivaradeva praised his family good Narasimha, who is taken by the prasasti-writer as Purusottama, for he starts with the mangalacarana "Om Namo Purusottamaya(17).

The Buddhist literature, we see, that some aboriginal gods and goddesses were taken by the Mahayanists into their own pantheon. According to Taranatha, Mahasiddha Savari was an important monk who converted the minister and the king of Orissa and one Maitra or Maitragupta who afterwards lived in Nalanda.(18). The goddess Parna-Sabari is highly regarded in the Mahayana School.(19) It is clearly evident that the Sabaras of Daksina Kosala, Kalinga and Kongada were associated with the Brahmanas as well as with the Mahayana Buddhists.

__The Sabaras as usual with time and influence accepted the names of Brahmanical gods and goddesses along with Lord Jagannath. They

worshipped the gods under the name of Kitung, and are named as Bhima, Rama, Hodepulu, Peda, Rungjung, Tumernna, Garasada, Jaganta, Mutta and Teata(20). In Saora the word 'Kittung' means 'god', so does the Gutob Kituch and the Remo and Pareng Kittung. Here Elwin meant Gutob to Gadabas, Remo to Bondas and Pareng to Parenga poroja of Koraput. Elwin wrote from his investigations that in Dantara village they spoke of seven Kittungs, viz. Garsada, Indraraika, Kuraitu, Maddia, Ranadiu, Sunaraika, Udurkuara, and the sons of the Kittungs were Jagannatha, Jodebulla, Mutta, Pedramadtung, Rungrung, Tumanna and Yete-tete whereas in Pattiti, in the Pottasingi valey of Sabaras knew of these Kittungs; Argatta, Bhimma, Garsada, Jaganatha, Kuraitu, Jodebulla, Labusum, Peda, Ramma and Sitabri(21). It certainly indicative of Jaganatha being taken in Sabaras life and culture even among the once living in the forests and hills of Ganjam and Koraput. There is another aspect as can be seen from the deities and temple names from Mahendra mountain reminds of Bhima, Kunti, Judhisthira - the Pandava relevance to Sabaras; the Bhima is still worshipped in the Dakshina Kosala area tribes in the form of two wooden pillars, placed at one end of the village. Mishra cites Jara Sabara class of Sabara tribe from the land between the confluence of the Indravati and Sabari, southern part of Koraput district. They are locally known as Raju, well this is a common title of kings in this part of the country. Their family deity is Nilamadhava whom they worship in their form and way. Mishra further writes, " The deity of Nilamadhava is four armed having all the four attributes of Visnu. Further the Rajus used to go to Nilamadhava of Kantillo (Orissa) as their centre of religion which they consider to be the holy land of their family. There are a number of Madhava images found in different parts of Orissa known as Niali Madhava, Lalita Madhava, Ganga Madhava, Sabari Madhava and Mudgala Madhava, etc. It appears that there are fourteen Madhava pithas in Orissa. The reason is, that Nilamadhava is the previous form of the present Jagannatha, worshipped in Lilacala. The ancient name of Jagannatha which is still in vogue in the Sabara languages is Sonam and the images have the name of Kitung. Of all Kutungs, Jaganaelo is the greatest and he is called the Lord of all the Lords and the Lord of the universe, according to Sabaras."(22)

The Buddhist influence on Sabaras was well marked in Western, Southern, Eastern as well as in the North-east also. The present Balasore and Keonjhar districts of Orissa was the seat of Mahayanists of the Buddhists, during 5th or 6th century A.D. The relationship between Buddhists and Brahmans been sour, and is evident from Bhaskaresvara temple at Bhubaneswar inscriptions of 5th century A.D., which is now in Orissa State Museum. As a result of it attempts were made to destroy Buddhist monasteries and the replace them with Saiva temples(23). During these events many Buddhist images were set up in Hindu temples.

__Tripathy writes from the 'Indradyumna Legend' which was also examined by R.Geib. It says, 'In the beginning of the present millenium, therefore, whom the worshippers of Jagannath felt the need and the necessity to explain to themselves and to others this strange form and the wooden character of their Deity, they naturally thought first of Nilamadhava which was the most common form of Visnu in those days. They claimed and propagated that their Jagannatha had not all along been so. He was, in fact, originally a Nilamadhava of stone which stood under the shade of a tree and was worshipped by the chief of the Sabara race. But when a Brahmin emissary of the king Indradyumna of Malva who wanted to have a darsana of the Lord, discovered Him once, He vanished and a divine voice (or a dream) gave the king to understand that He would now no more be visible to the people in his Nilamadhava form which was appropriate only for the golden age of the humanity (krtayuga) but would instead assume a new shape more suitable to the prevailing time, to be worshipped as a Deity made of wood(24).

The Jagannatha - The Ageless Deity of the Hindus

Mishra wrote the same legend, in his words, "Once upon a time, a king named Indradyumna of the Maga Clan wanted to remove the Lord Nilamadhava from the Sabara village. For fulfillment of this object, he captured the Sabara-Satrusal whom he confined but soon liberated when he heard a divine voice to set him free. The same voice advised him to construct a lofty temple at Nilakandara

(Puri). Accordingly, the temple was built; but where was the deity (image)? The king, then employed a Brahmana named Vidyapati, in search of the deity, Nilamadhava. The Brahmana started for the Sabara village on the Mahendragiri (Mahendra Mountain) where he met a handsome Sabara girl named Lalita and fell in love with her and at last married her.

Being a spy, employed by the King Indradyumnya, Vidyapati was all the time searching for the deity whom he could spot-out in the dense forest of the locality and sent the news immediately to the king where upon some young men of the Sabara tribe were appointed in the sacred log (Dirubrahma) for building the images of the supreme lord."(25)

According to the mythical and legendary accounts, that a certain Kamarnava I, son Virasimha, gave over his own territory (Gangavadi in Mysore) to his paternal uncle and with his brother set out to conquer the earth and came to Mahendragiri, where he worshipped Gokarnasvami and conquered aged king, Baladitya (or Sabaraditya) and took possession of Kalinga countries(26).

__It is well suggested that civilisation progressed through the course of the river Chitrotpala or Mahanadi to the coastal regions of Orissa from the far-away hinderland of Madhyabharata. There are number of temples dedicated to Visnu under the name of Madhava on the lower course of the Mahanadi. The two good examples of Madhava cult are Gandharadi and Kontilo which in later times spread to the coastal belt of Puri with the names of Lalita Madhava, Niali Madhava, Niparia Madhava etc(27).

An inscription of temple Sobhaneswarara, at Nilamadhava, speaks of one Nagavamsi king named Vaidyanatha(28) who had built one temple in a place named Bhujangamapuri. The god Nilamadhava, according to tradition, was worshipped by the Sabara Chief Visvavasu, was ultimately transformed into Purusottama Jagannatha. Sri S.N.Rajaguru had secured one palm-leaf manuscript titled, Jarosabara Vamsa Bibarani (Dynastic account of the Jarasabara) from the village Dimirijhola in Parlakhemundi Taluk proves the fact

that originally the deity was worshipped by Sabaras on the Mahendra mountain(29).

According to Madala Panji, Yayati Kesari discovered the descendants of the Puri priests in the border region of the western Orissa and eastern Madhya Pradesh. It was where the early existence of a Purusottama-Nrsimha cult has been proved which in later times had greater influence on the Jagannath cult of Puri.

__This border region as said above was the original homeland of the Somavamsis when they were still the feudatory chiefs of the Sabarapuriya king who had worshipped Visnu as 'Sahari-Narayana' ('Visnu-Narayana of the Saora-woman'). During 15th century A.D. in Oriya Mahabharata, Sarala Dasa wrote that Jagannatha himself announced that previously (in the satyayuga-age) he had existed in the form of the Sabari-Narayana(30).

The Indradyumna legend is also interpreted another form, which is "Long ago, there lived on the Mahendra Mountain twelve families of the Sabara tribe who built for them twelve houses. They were known as the Bara-Gharias (twelve settlers). They used to worship and protect their supreme Lord Nilamadhava which was installed in the form of a divine logn (Darubrahma) and was worshipped by Satrusala Sabara who lived in a Sabara village on the submit of the Mahendra Mountain(31). The story has much similarity those prevailing among Remo (Bondo tribe of Koraput) also the Gutob Gadabas of Koraput, and all of them belong to austric stock only and distant neighbours. The Remo speak of first twelve villages which came and settled in the present hills, so also the Gutob speak of 12 brothers who came crossing the Godavari river to the present habitat.

Mishra wrote, "There is every probability that the god Narayana was installed on the Mahendra Mountain where he was worshipped by the Mtharas for a long time. There might have been also, prior to this period, some unknown god worshipped by the Sabaras on the same mountain. Now, when the Matharas came, they over-powered the Sabaras, and it is not unlikely that they, on the

acquisition of the deity worshipped by the Sabaras, Aryanised the same and began to worship it at the same place. Next came the Gangas and the deity was similarly worshipped by them in the name of Gokarnesvara because of their faith in Saivism. The same deity began to be worshipped as Svayambhu by the Sailodbhavas. Now, the Sailodbhavas were the worshippers of both Siva and Visnu which is evident from their records. This is also corroborated by the fact that they were worshipping Cakradhara Madhava or Bhagavan Madhava as mentioned in their grants in Kongada area in which Purusottama Ksetra is situated. Their love and respect towards the god Madhava is very often recorded in their charters, as they seem to compare themselves with Bhagavan Cakradhara although they are Saivas. This shows that they were certainly patronising the god. We also have another god Maninaga alias Balabhadra in the 6th century and a goddess namely Stambhesvari in the 4th century A.D. in Tosali and Gondrama areas respectively. There is no evidence at our disposal to suggest anything definitely regarding the removal of Narayana Madhava of the Mahendragiri and Kongada Mandala to Puri. But, the god came to be closely associated with the place, and many other places in Kongada Mandala came to have shrines with the deities bearing the same names. It is probable that during the time of the Sailodbhavas the deity was removed to Krsnagiri and subsequently to Nilagiri. There is another god called Nandagirinatha worshipped by the Svetaka Gangas. It is likely that the conception of Nandagirinatha or Krsnagirinatha later on gave rise to Nilagirinath-Jagannatha."(32)

The Skanda Purana presents Purusottama as 'Sabara Devata' or the deity worshipped by the Sabaras under the main leadership of Visvavahu. A legend originates that during Varaha incarnation of Visnu, Bramha asked Vishnu as to the means of attaining salvation of all beings. Vishnu replied; 'He himself is being worshipped as Nilamadhava in the Blue Mountain of the holy Purusottama Pitha, and Salvation on earth can be relieved by visit to this god and place. This frightened Yama, the god of death that he would lose his importance and position as well. Thus Visnu again declared that he shall be invisible from that place after some days. The story goes

ahead. It depicts, "The Rohini Kunda was located a mile to the west of the Kapa-vrksa (the desire-yielding tree) on the Blue Mountain, at its north the shrine of Nilamadhaba was being worshipped by a Sabara. The Devas used to worship Lord Nilamadhaba every day here and non-else knew the sanctity of this holy peace Indradyumna, a king of solar-dynasty, standing fifth in line of succession to Brahma, was ruling the Kingdom of Avanti in the Satyayuga. One day he enquired from his wise councillors about the place of Lord Visnu and learned from one Sanyasi that Lord Visnu himself adhore as Purusottama at the 'Blue Mountain' of the country of Odra. Thus Indradyumna set Vidyapati, the brahmin priest to Odra. Vidyapati, went to a Sabara village, to the west of Blue Mountain and woned the good wishes of the Sabara Chief Visvavasu. He then expressed his desire to get a glimpses of Lord Purusottama as Nilamadhava and was obliged by Visvavasu. Vidyapati, returned back to Avanti and the king Indradyumna set out for Utkala accompanied with Narada. But Lord Visnu, in the meantime, in order to fulfill the pledge given to Yamaraja, made the shrine of Nilamadhava invisible in a heap of sand. Thus Chief Visvavasu sent this sad message to Indradyumna, who was on his way. He was very aggrieved at the news, but Narada however, assured him that the Lord would appear in the form of Daru(wood). The king consolated thus left to perform horse-sacrifice at Nilagiri, where on the closing day of the ceremony, the Lord Nilamadhava made Himself visible to Indradyumna in a dream. Soon when the king was bathing, he received the message that Daru with four branches floating in the sea. Then with supreme care and ceremony the king brought the Daru placed on the Mahavedi.

The Mahabharata, in Oriya written by Sarala Dasa during the region of Kapilendra Deva (1435-1466 (A.D) founder of the Surya dynasty the version of Indradyumna legend appear.

According to an account when king Indradyumna noticed the Daru, in the Rohini Kunda, he engaged people to lift it out of the Kunda. But the Daru was so heavy that they were unsuccessful. Indradyumna was despaired and did not know what to do. Then Lord Jagannatha told him in a dream that only Sabara Jara and Basu

Brahmin would be able to lift him as it was not merely a log, but the pinda i.e. the very body of Lord Krishna himself. Thus Indradyumna asked both Sabara Jara and Basu Brahmin to help him in lifting the Daru. When the Daru was lifted it was Jara Sabara who could lift it easily while the Basu Brahmin could lift it with difficulty.(33)

According to Mishra, "Sarala Dasa appears to ascribe the origin of the worship of Jagannatha to that of Madhava or Nilamadhava, also named Sabarinarayana by the Sabara community of the bygone days. The story begins with Vasu Sabara, (Visvavasu), the son of Jara Sabara, who used to worship secretly the stone image of the traditional god of his community-Madhava. The practice of secret worship is ascribed to the command of the deity Madhava Himself; the god wanted to be worshipped secretly because of the Kaliyuga, and had threatened Vasu to wipe out his community if he divulged the secret to others. Sarala Dasa next proceeds to introduce in the story another character, Galamadhava, the king of Kanci. One day, the Brahmin family-priest of the king, also named 'Vasu', told to Galamadhava the secret worship of Nilamadhava in the Sabara palli. Galamadhava sent his priest (Vasu) to find Nilamadhava. Vasu made friends with Vasu Sabara, and was taken blind-folded tot he spot where the deity was then worshipped. While he was thus led to the deity, he had skilfully managed to drop grain seeds along the way so that he could trade and reach the place afterwards. After hearing from the priest Vasu these secrets of Nilamadhava, Galamadhava set out on an expedition to the Sabara palli to take possession of the deity. But, to his misfortune the deity had disappeared. The god Nilamadhava reassured Jara (Vasu-Savara's father) that he would incarnate himself as Buddha in Nilagiri. Galamadhava was enraged at the disappearance of the deity from the spot and attacked the Sabaras with a view to extracting from them the information regarding the whereabouts of the deity. A fierce fight ensued and all the Sabaras, were killed except one. The surviving one cursed the king that his entire family would be extinct, as he was responsible for the destruction of the Sabara community. When Galamadhava was fighting with the last Sabara he heard a voice from above asking him to desist from so doing as he was a great devotee of the Lord.

Here ends the story of Galamadhava; Indradyumna."(34)

Now when Padma Purna is examined it referred to Purusottama as worshipped by the Bhils, and as already said Skanda Purna prevents Purusottama to Sabara Devata. The idea of worshipping the three deities of Balbhadra, Subhadra and Jagannatha, each with separate hymn or mantra comes for the first time from Skanda Purana.(35)

The Sabara Tradition in the Jagannath Temple:

__In the process of worship in the temple, the Sabaras have got a distinct role. Tripathi wrote, "The Daitas(sans. Daitya, a term originally meaning 'demon', but in Orissa applied to the aboriginal people living in the forests) who take charge of the Deities during the period of anavasara, also arrange the car festival and play a very important role in the ceremony of Navakalevara.(36) The word "Daita" also means "Most beloved one". They are believed to be the descendants of the Sabara Visvavasu, who, according to the legend of the foundation of the Jagannath Temple(37), worshipped Jagannath (in the Nilamadhava form) in a forest before Vidyapati. Jagannatha was in fact originally a Nilamadhava of stone which stood under the shade of a tree and was worshipped by the chief of the Sabara race(38).

__The importance of the Sabaras in Jagannath temple at Puri is remarkable. The Sevakas are called Daitapatis who are of the Sabara origin. They are in the worship and services of the Deities, as said above specially at the time of 'Navakalevara' during car festival.

The tradition speaks that, In Dvapara-Yuga, when Lord Krishna was born in the family of 'Yadus'. Lord Krishna's father, Vasudeva was the cousin of Vasu Sabara. When Lord Krishna left His mortal body, there was quarrel between the Sabaras and Pandavas as to who would do the funeral rites. Thus in order to solve the problem, Arjuna and Jara carried off the body of the Lord from Dvaraka to the sea-shore and started the funeral. Possibly, that funeral ground is identified to the present 'Kaivalya Vaikuntha' or 'Koili Vaikuntha' of

Puri. The Sabaras too had come to this place and caught hold of the 'Indranilamani' (the azure blue stone) that was favourite of the Lord's dress. This was in the funeral place, and Sabaras worshipped it as a token of last sacred aspect of their Lord. It is believed that possibly the Sabaras constructed the Holy Image of Lord Krishna with the help of that azure blue-stone and the image is being worshipped from time immemorial in the name of Sri Nilamadhava (the Blue Lord). The mortal body of Lord became the sacred log (Daru) and started floating to and fro on the perilous sea. At last, Jara Sabara, who by mistake had killed Sri Krishna, and was in utter despair found it. He kept the Daru secretly and began worshipping it, joined by his son, Visvavasu. The 'Darubrahma' (the Divine Wood) which appeared in the dream of Indradyumna, the king of Malava was the sacred body of the departed Lord Krishna. Soon after, as the legend says, the 'Darubrahma' was carved by Visvakarma, the divine artist who descended in disguise into the Holy Images of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra. On Navakalevara occasion when 'Brahman' is placed inside the new images, it is presumed to be the azure blue-stone which was worshipped by Sabara, might have been placed there. The Sabaras believe that Jagannath to be the descendant of Lord Krishna. They found and claimed the mortal body of the Lord, declaring themselves to belong to the family of Lord, who emerged from Pravasa Tirtha and incidentally came up to Puri coast by crossing the Vindhacala. They were connected to the Satava family which is synonymous to Yadu or Yadu vamsa and are thus closely related to Lord Sri Krishna. Thus the Sabara Daitapatis at present bury the old images on the event of Nilakalevara and perform all funeral rites in traditional manner. They are also the descendants of Visvavasu.

But, in other ways, with deviations Sarla Dasa narrates that the body of Lord Krishna could not be burnt on the funeral pyre, after he was shot dead by an aboriginal hunter (Sabara). The body was placed on sea near Dvaraka, which came floating to Puri, (round the Cape Comarion) and remained with the custody of the Sabara for some time and later became mysteriously a tree out of which a statue was carved in the form of Buddha(39), this being the incarnation of

Lord Visnu it followed to Lord Krishna, the incarnation.

In the dark nights of 'Amabasya', Jara Sabara aimed and shot his arrow at the lively Lotus Feet of Lord Krishna, mistaking them to be deer's ear. It is believed to be the Krishna Chaturdasi of Asadha (early June). The memory of the myth even today leads to the legendry celebration of the Navakalesvara on the fourteenth day of dark fortnight on the Asadha. There is no historical evidence about the relationships between the Lord Jagannath and the Daitapatis, but the source is the myth and legends.

It is said that just after the Bathing Festival in the full moon day of Jyestha, the Deities are worshipped in the secret (Anavasara) chamber for full two weeks. This is the period when Daitas are the worshippers of Deities, but not the Brahmins. The worship is very much engaging and continuous that the Datapatis do not have time to relax and are in busy mood. This period is called Anavasara, means engagement without rest. There is no Vedic offerings to the Deities during this fortnight. The Daitapatis decorate the body of the Deities in the various cosmetics, various kinds of oil and ornaments. They offer fruits to the Deities and themselves take Prasad there. It is said that in the Samarpan Kriya', which is the process of holy offerings, they affectionately offer fruits to the Deities after testing them by themselves. The spirit of devotion in this case is informal and not ritualistic. It is a heart to heart love of tribal offering to the Deities. They sing different hymns in a low key and offer everything to the Deities in the most tribal way of worship.

One can grasp the remarkable influence of the Sabaras at the outset of the car festival. Before the Deities are taken to the respective cars, different types of fruits are offered, and the Daitapatis tie up charms and talismens made up of roots and leaves in the arms of the Deities. Such is the belief that these talismens are supposed to protect the body according to tantras. All these process is characteristically of tribal and Sabara mode of worship.

Again, on the cars the worship is not a Vedic lines. Before the car

is pulled, the Deities are dressed in the typical Sabara manner, the Peti, a type of Sabara costume is placed on the waist of the Deities. At the time of Pahandi (the procession to the car) the Daitapatis sing ritualistic 'Malasree' songs by tieing up the Petis around their waist. The deities move towards the cars in north-west (Isana) direction, in contrary to Aryan process in which the procession moves towards eastern direction. This is also one Sabara impact on car festival. When the cars move, the Dahukas continue dance on the car before the Deities by singing vulgar musical extracts. The Parna Sabaras have the traditional belief that such songs and wordings rendered by them might protect and safeguard the Deities on the cars by wading off the evil spirits. Such songs are also sung by Gutob Gadaba tribes of Koraput during the procession of Mahaprabhu. This is a type of 'fertility cult' observed in most of the tribal societies.

Mishra wrote, "The 'Mancansnana' (the bathing ceremony on the Divine alter) in spite of its Vedic connotations, is out and out a Sabara process. The bathing of Deities is done exclusively with the water of confined and closed well, which goes against the Vedic way of bathing, the Deities with the running water of rivers or open wells. The water inside the golden well in the northern side of the temple, is kept untouched all through the year and with the help of this water the bathing is performed. The Sabaras attach sacredness and purity to and use the 'Anadabha' water for any holy bath, which is stored inside the thick forest unpenetrated by sunlight. In the light of this belief, here also the secret and sacred water stored inside the golden well (Suna-Kua) is used in the bathing of the three Deities.

The Daitapatis sit together with the deities and take the 'Gyantisara' dishes (the dishes taken by the members of the same family together). They practically safeguard and take care of the Deities every now and then. Therefore, the Vedic Aryans and non-Aryans have joined hands in worshipping the Trinity of this temple. Of course, only in two festivals the rights and duties of the Sabaras are duly executed with traditional decorum. They do not have any privilege to participate in all other festivals of the Deities, which are celebrated according

to Aryan religious ethos, the Aryan and the non-Aryan or in other words the Vedic Aryans and non-Vedic Aryans."(40)

The Sabaras (daitas) and the half-Sabaras (Pati Mahapatra), the Brahmin priest, the Rajaguru of the King, play very important role in the ceremony of Navakalevara, where after performing various ceremonies the brhamapadartha (the immortal life substance) is transferred from the old statue of Jagannath into the new. A detailed account has been given by Tripathy, G.C. in the chapter of Navakalevara (41).

The setting out in search of the Daru is an elaborate ceremony and the Daitas play the most important role. They are 'Bad-bada' Daita (family title: dasa-mahapatra, responsible for Balabhadra, 'Majhi-bada' Daita (family title: dasa, responsible for Subhadra) and 'Mahaprabhunka-bada' Daita (family title: Svai-Mohapatra, responsible for Jagannath) respectively.

Tripathy wrote, "The different rites of the Navakalevara ceremony are a nice example of the superim-position of the Brahmanic Hinduism on a cult which was purely tribal in origin. The presence of the Daitas, who are avowedly of tribal origin, everywhere in this ceremony and the important part that they play in this ceremony is an irrefutable proof to this effect."(42)

_The Deities are carved by the carpenters (Maharanas) all of whom belong to the class of Daitas. The carving of the images takes place behind the closed doors and nobody else except the Daitas and Pati Mahapatra are allowed.(43)

It can be said that the services and duties entrusted to Daita brings them in close contact to Deities, which are like dressing and moving them. This tradition followed is clearly indicative of tribal origin; but so far there is no clear satisfactory explanation to trace the origin and most of the research on Jagannath has been attributed to other studies than the tribal background.

Mishra rightly pointed out, "When the first devotee of the Lord i.e. Visvavasu prohibited Vidyapati from looking at the Image of Nilamadhava, the root of the conflict obviously lay there. The Aryan king Indradyumna was afterwards interested to Aryanize the God Nilamadhava who was in fact the Deity of the Sabaras. In this connection, the Sabaras actively protested, None can say whether any group won or not in that conflict; yet it is quite evident that both the races have enlightened each other's cultural way of life through exchange of ideas and outlook. Basically, the Indian culture is a true replica of the Jagannatha Culture. Various castes and creed, communities and sects, customs and traditions taken together, have become an organic living whole and have made one religion for all. The tributaries of multifarious culture in India have joined in the unity of all Indian cultures and manifested here in Jagannatha Temple. Lord Jagannatha stands as the single eternal symbol of that cultural assimilation."(44)

Thus it can be concluded that the Sabaras have all through travelled with the induction of civilization in Indian soil, their mentions in all epics, ancient literature and history. They were in Ramayana, in Mahabharata with Buddhism, with Jainism, with sakti cult, with Savites, with Vaishnavities with Lord Jagannath and all the process of Indian life, history, religion and philosophy development, thus it is not true to say that Sabaras, tribal gods Lord Jagannath was taken into the process of Hinduization as has been remarked by Eschmann et.al in their works., 'The cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa'. It was a process of identification to the neo-administration of the occupants through Sabara deity Lord Jagannath, the process of which is not new and unknown, but universally practised and still continue to exist in the regional identity development for dynasties and rulers for smooth sailing. Many sailed on these ships and continue even in modern times through these indigenous or native or aboriginal. The chapter was an attempt to place the Sabara tribe relationships to religions and cults that they have come across in the process of evolution for a better world and being a part of the say.

References

(1) Baloda Plates, E.I., Vol.VII, p.102 and for Rajim Plates, C.I.I., Vol.III

(2) A.S.R.,Vol.XVII, pp.25-26

(3) Inscriptions of Orissa, Vol.I, Part II, p.167

(4) A.S.R.1881-82, Vol.XVIII, pp.8-9

(5) Watters on Huien-tsang's Travels in India, Vol.II, p.200

(6) The aboriginal tribe of the Pulindas is mentioned in the arly Brahminical literature like Satapatha Brahmana. They had a country of their own called Pulindaraj-rastra as referred to in a grant of Maharaj Hastin of the Gupta era 198 or A.D. 518. E.I.Vol.XXI, pp.124-26

(7) Mishra,K.C.(1984) The Cult of Jagannath, Calcutta

(8) Generally we find the wooden images are worshipped by the aboriginals-Sabaras

(9) J.A.S.B., Vol.VII, New Series, pp.43-47

(10) E.I.Vol.XXVIII, Pt.III, pp.107-112

(11) J.K.H.R.S., Vol.II, No.I, pp.251-252

(12) Pargiter - Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p-3

(13) J.K.H.R.S.Vol.III,p.110

(14) Indo-Aryan Culture, Vol.II, 1953-54, p.122

(15) Abhidhanacintamoni, p.9, Slokas 24-25(Devakanda). The name Svayambhu is mentioned among the other Tirthankaras

(16) A.S.I., Vol.VII, pp.196-198

(17) E.I.Vol.XI, p.190

(18) Mystic Tales of Taranath, pp.11-12

(19) In the Pag-Sam-Jon-Zan he is described as having belonged to hill tribe called Sabaras or Huntsmen in Bengali where he met Nagarjuna during the latter's stay in that country, Sadhanamala - Introduction, p.XLVI

(20) Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol.VI, p.335

(21) Elwin, Verrier(1955) The Religion of an Indian Tribe

(22) Mishra,K.C.(1984) The Cult of Jagannath Calcutta,

(23) Dr.K.C.Panigrahi's Archaeological remains at Bhubaneswar, p.186

(24) Indradyumna Legend - in Sanskrit & Oriya critically examined by R.Geib, "Indradyumna-Legend, ein Beitray Zur Geschichte das Jagannatha Kultes, Weisb aden (1975) cited by G.C.Tripathy.

(25) Mishra, K.C(1984) The Cult of Jagannath, Calcutta

(26) Sitapati, G.V.Kort.Copper plate grant of Ananta varmadeva alias, Chodaganga (J.A.H.R.S vol.I,p.106-127 line 47) cited in History of the Eastern Chalukyas of Virgi by B.V.Rao, Hyderabad, p-328.

(27) Mishra,K.C.(1984) The Cult of Jagannath, Calcutta

(28) Inscriptions of Orissa, Vol.III, Part II, p.338. The author of this inscription may be identified with the author of the temple inscription of Anantavasudeva of Bhubaneswar who lived in the time of Narasingha-I of the Imperial Ganga dynasty

(29) EI, xxvii, 322-23; Journal of the Kalinga Historical Research Society, i, 265-66

(30) No.III:XII

(31) EI, xxvi, 49-58

(32) Mishra,K.C.(1984) The Cult of Jagannath, Calcutta, p-

(33) Sarala Dasa-Mohabharata, Mu Sali Parba, Adhy, 8-12, ed by A.B.Mohanty

(34) Ibid

(35) Skandapurana, Chs.20 and 47

(36) Tripathi, Gaya Charan (1978), 'Navakalevara' in The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa - Ed.E.Anncharlott, K.Hermann and Tripati, G.C, New Delhi (1986)

(37) Geib, R (1975) Die Indradyumna - Legende. Ein Beeitrag Zur Geschichte des Jagannath Kultes, Wiesbaden (1965), cited by Tripati Gaya Chandran Ibid.

(38) Ibid

(39) Sarala Dasa, Mohabharata in Oriya, Musali Parva.

(40) Mishra, K.C (1984) The Cult of Jagannath, Calcutta, P.96.

(41) Tripathy, G.C. (1986), Navakalevara: The unique ceremony of the 'birth' and 'death' of the Lord of the world in Eschmann *et.al*.edi. The cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa. South Asian studies No:VIII, Heidelberg University, p- 223 ff.

(42) Ibid ref.p-264

(43) Cf.Pur.Mah (Skanda Purana) Adty.19 sl.33.34 cited by Tripathy G C, p-252

(44) Mishra, K.C(1984) The Cult of Jagannath, Calcutta, P.97.

The Panduvamsis of Dakshina Kosala

A major ruling dynasty of the Chhattisgarh region of undivided Madhya Pradesh after the Sarabhapuriyas was Panduvamsis of Dakshina Kosala.

Lineage

Natesa Aiyar (1914) showed Udayana of the Pandava as of Sabara lineage. The Lakneswar Temple (Kharod) inscription of Indrabala, calls the family sasi-kula or lunar lineage was the oldest records of the Panduvamsis (1). A lunar origin for the dynasty is claimed in some other records also.

As per Pt. Nilakantha Das, "Uddiyana seems to be a Buddhistic term meaning Yana or the way of religious thinking and practice by the Uddas or the land inhabited or influenced by them. These Uddas appear to be a race of the Savaras or the Austrics greatly influenced by some Dravidians or at least the rudiments of the Dravidian language in later times"(2).

Territories under the Dynasty

All discovered records of Panduvamsis so far, with the exception of the Kalanjar inscription of Udayana were from the Chhattisgarh region. The Panduvamsis claimed to lordship over the Kosala country and the king assumed the title Kosaladhipati, 'Lord of Kosala' (3). It is the Adhabhara grant of his son Nannaraja II that he is described as the overlordship of the entire Kosala, Utkala and other mandalas (provinces), which he had earned by his own merit (4). The Panduvamsi power, Mahasiva Tivara extended temporarily to the east. The Senkapat inscription of Sivagupta showed that a part of the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra was within control of the Panduvamsis (5).

It is believed that the early members of Pandu dynasty formed

their first kingdom, in Chanda region of Maharastra; it was from here that they occupied Kosala (6). This view is drawn on the impression that the inscription of the time of Nannaraja (7) referring to the restoration by Bhavadeva, the fourth brother of Nannaraja, of a decayed Buddhist temple originally built by a king named Suryaghosa was found at Bhandak in the Chanda District. There has been much uncertainty and debate about the actual proof of this inscription. A group of historians who believe that it was Bhandak of Chanda District of present Maharashtra to be the place of origin and others believe it to be Arang of Raipur in Madhya Pradesh. This is based on evidence and argument base.

It was Rev.Stevenson who first published the inscriptions and identified Bhandak as its find spot (8). Cunningham also agreed to the findings (9). Hira Lal (10) D.R. Bhandarkar (11) Moreshwar G. Dikshit and D.C.Sircar (12) had same view. Kielhorn collected information, pointed out that, the inscription was brought to the Central Museum, Nagpur, from Ratanpur (Bilaspur District, Madhya Pradesh) (13). V.V.Mirashi initially accepted the view that the find spot was from Bhandak and believed that Tivaradeva's predecessors were ruling from that area (14). But shortly thereafter, he was convinced that the stone bearing the inscription was identified somewhere in Chhattisgarh and the view that it belonged to Bhandak was founded on untenable information (15). On the testimony of Vinayak Rao Aurangabadkar, he (16) and Y.K.Deshpande (17) pointed out that the inscription was originally from Arang, about fifty kilometers' southwest of Sirpur in the Raipur District of present Chhattisgarh. At the instance of Richard Jenkings, British Resident at Nagpur (1807 to 1826),Aurangabadkar, undertook a tour of Chhattisgarh region and submitted a report to him on the inscriptions in Chhattisgarh. The report is at present in the India Office Library, London (18). According to the report, Aurangabadkar found the Bhavadeva Ranakesarin inscription on a slab affixed to a large temple at Aring, or Arang. However, D.C.Sircar continued to think that the inscription originally came from Bhandak, but not Arang. N.Natesa Aiyar mentions of "The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsant, who visited India towards the beginning of the seventh century A.D., mentioned

a line of Buddhist Kings ruling at Bhandak."

Capital

The copper plates discovered with relation to Panduvamsis were all issued from Sripura, which was the capital of Dakshina Kosala during the reigns of the Panduvamsis. The Sirpura, was probably Sarbhapura of Savaras and Sri was prefixed when Vishnu/Buddhist worships patronised by the Chief. This is found elsewhere also.

Genealogy

The stone and copper-plate inscriptions of the family discovered so far supply the following genealogy, as per Shastri (19)

Udayana

Indrabala Name lost

Nannadeva I Isanadeva 1
2 3 Bhavadeva
(Names are lost)
Ranakesarin

Tivaradeva Candragupta
(or Mahasiva-Tivara)
Nannaraja II Harsagupta =Vasata, daughter of King
Suryavarman of Magadha

Sivagupta-Balarjuna Ranakesarin

Sivanandin

Mirashi had pointed out earliest (20), that the Panduvamsis of Dakshina Kosala were probably related to their counterparts in Mekala. He further postulated that Udayana, the first known

member of the Panduvamsis of Kosala, was probably a son of Bharatabala, also known as Indra, who was till recently regarded as the last Pandava king of Mekala (21).

Some relationship between these two lines cannot be ruled out, there are many difficulties as proposed in regarding the Panduvamsis of Kosala as the lineal descendants of the Pandavas of Mekala (22). We may therefore; Ajaya M.Sastry remarked, regard the two families as collaterally related to each other, the exact relationship being indeterminable in the present state of our knowledge.

Udayana

Udayana is mentioned to be the first member of the Panduvamsis of Kosala. There is no inscription of Udayana by himself and he is referred to in a couple of the inscriptions of his descendants, viz., Arang stone inscription of Nanna I (no.III:I) and one of the Sirpur stone inscriptions of the time of Sivagupta Balarjuna (no.III: XIII). He had erected a brick temple of the god Bhadresvara (Siva)(23) at Kalanjar (24). It was thus concluded that Udayana ruled over a principality including Kalanjar and adjoining area in Central India. The present state of knowledge is insufficient to determine if he was in South Kosala. However, his successors conquered the Chhattisgarh region. He is known to have at least two sons: (i) Indrabala and (ii) his younger brother whose name has been lost (25). King Suryaghosa who, according to the Arang stone inscription of Nanna I, had built a temple of Buddha, which later was restored by Udayana's grandson, Bhavadeva Ranakesarin. This brings to light his relation to Suryaghosa.

Udayana Successors

Udayana succeeded by his eldest son Indrabala. He is credited to be the first member of the family who definitely ruled over at least a part of Kosala. A mutilated Kharod (Bilaspur District) Laksmanesvara temple inscription states that Indrabala had destroyed his enemies (26). The rise of Harsavardhana might have forced Indrabala to move away from his kingdom to Kosala, where after the fall of the Sarabhapuriyas under political chaos enabled

him to carve out a small country for himself.

The order of succession after Indrabala is unsolved. In the Arang inscription of Nanna I indicate that Indrabala's younger brother ruled over a part of the Pandava kingdom in Kosala and was succeeded by his youngest son Bhavadeva.

It can be concluded that either both Bhavadeva and Isanadeva ruled over parts of the Pandava kingdom of Kosala as subordinates under Nanna I or all the three, viz. Nanna I, Bhavadeva and Isanadeva, ruled independently and ultimately Nanna I succeeded in becoming the master of the whole of the Pandava kingdom. How this happened, as per Shastri is one unsolved question.

Bhavadeva was also known as Ranakesarin (literally, 'a lion in the battle') on account of his killing the mad elephants of the enemies; the viruda of Apriya-vaisika, 'one disdainful of prostitutes'; and Cintadurga, by causing anxiety (cinta) to his enemies and difficult to break (durga).

He patronised Buddhism and maintained the Buddha temple built by Suryaghosa and repaired and the monastery attached to it was whitewashed and adorned with stepped well, gardens, etc (27).

Isanadeva was a follower of Saivism. A Sirpura stone inscription of the time of Sivagupta Balarjuna indicates that he covered the earth with Siva temples (28).

Mahasia Tivara

Mahasiva Tivara succeeded his father Nanna I. It is known from his three copperplate charters.

Tivaradeva as 'Kosaladhipati' or the lord of Kosala was described in the seal—inscription, while in the text of the charters themselves he is said to have acquired the over lordship of the whole of Kosala (prapta-sakala-adhipatya) (29). The Adhabhara plates of Nannaraja II denotes that his father Trivaradeva, had acquired mastery over

the whole of Kosala, Utkala and other provinces by of his own merit (30). That the claim to have achieved possession of Utkala, etc., is not totally unfounded is indicated by the fact that Nannaraja, the issuer of the charter, himself is credited with the possessions of the province of Kosala alone (31). It appears that Tivaradeva had tried to take advantage of the struggle for succession in the Sailodbhava kingdom and apparently gained success. This new acquisition did not last long by the fact that Tivara's son Nannaraja himself did not lay any claim to the Utkala-mandala(32).

Tivaradeva was a follower of Vaisnavism and bore the title of parama-Vaisnava, i.e., a devout worshipper of Visnu (33). It was in keeping with his faith that Tivaradeva imprinted on his seal a seated figure of Garuda with outspread wings and grasping a snake with raised hood in each hand as the principal device and wheel and conch-shell as subsidiary devices.

Tivaradeva was most respected as the greatest ruler of Panduvamsis. He brought the entire Kosala country under one rule and ruled right up to the end of the dynasty. He conquered the Sailodbhava kingdom of Kongoda, though temporarily political control over the adjoining region of Orissa.

Nanna is said to have ruling the entire Kosalamandala. The omission of reference to the Utkala-mandala, which is mentioned in connection with his father's dominions, indicates the loss of Utkala either before to or during his reign.

Like his father Tivaradeva, Nanna II also was a follower of Vaisnavism and enjoyed the sectarian epithet Parama-Vaisnava.

Candragupta

There is no record of the reign of Candragupta himself, but known from his grandson's reign.

D.C.Sircar proposed to identify Nannaraja mentioned in the Senkapat inscription of the Sivagupta Balarjuna with the homonymous father of Mahasiva Tivara and Candragupta.

Harsagupta

Candragupta was succeeded by his son Harsagupta who is known from references in many records, of the reign of the next king Sivagupta Balarjuna. Harsagupta was a Vaisnava and is said to have worshipped Acyuta all the time. The construction of a temple of Visnu in his memory is also a pointer in the same direction.

Sivagupta Balarjuna

Sivagupta Balarjuna, son of Harsagupta ascended the Panduvamsi throne. He had a long reign of not less than fifty-seven years (34). He had a younger brother named Ranakesarin who is said to have helped him in his conquests (35). His son Sivanandin and maternal uncle Bhaskaravarman are also known.

Two villages mentioned in the Lodhia plates of the fifty-seventh year of Sivagupta's reign, Vaidyapai and Khadirapadra, have been located in the Sambalpur or Kalahandi region of Orissa (36) indicating thereby the inclusion of at least a portion of the eastern part of Kosala in his kingdom. The ruins of Sirpur in Raipur (undivided Madhya Pradesh), of Ranipur-Jharial in Balangirpatna and Belkhandi in Kalahandi district (Orissa) (36) are believed to have preserved the glories of his rule.

Sivagupta changed the religion and reverted back to Saivism and was styled Parama-Mahesvara. He himself donated a village in favour of a Buddhist establishment and a private benefactor provided for a free feeding house for the Buddhist monks (37). Sivagupta Balarjuna's mother built a temple of Visnu, the same as the so-called Laksmana temple at Sirpur.

The last ruler:

Sivagupta Balarjuna is known to be the last Panduvamsin monarch of Dakshina Kosala, and nothing is known of the fate of the family in the eighth century A.D. From a stone inscription found in

a wall of the Rajivalocana temple at Rajim, about twenty-eight miles south by east of Raipur, records the erection of a temple dedicated to Visnu by the Nala king Vilasatunga (38). The inscription mentions Vilasatunga'a father Viruparaja and grandfather Prthviraja also. It is evident that the region round Rajim in the Raipur District was under Vilasatunga at the time of the construction of the temple in question, which is undoubtedly the same as the modern temple of Rajivalocana. The record has been assigned to about the eighth century A.D. on palaeographical grounds (39). Thus, it appears that the Nalas, who were the neighbours of the Panduvamsis on the south in Umerkote region of Koraput district, took advantage of the decline of the Panduvamsin power after Sivagupta and Vilasatunga succeeded in capturing the Raipur region from Sivagupta's weak successors (40). Whether Vilasatunga's rule was confined to the Raipur region or he annexed some other parts of Chhattisgarh also cannot be determined in the present state of inadequate knowledge. Be that as it may, the fact remains that after Sivagupta we get no trace of the presence of Panduvamsis in the Chhattisgarh region forming the western part of Dakshinas Kosala which passed successively under the Nalas, Banas and Kalachuris, and they are found ruling in western Orissa which corresponded to the eastern part of Kosala.

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(23) Kielhorn in EI, iv, 257, fn.4; JRAS, 1905

(24) Sirpur Lithic record no.III:XIII, verse 2

(25) Mirashi, V.V. see note 950 above. Vide also Hira Lal, ICPB, 125 no.208.

(26) The Arang inscription of Nanna I (no.III:I)

(27) No.III:XIII, verse.3.

(28) No.III:II, text-lines 16-17; IV, text-line 19. In III:III, text-line 16

(29) No.III: V, text-lines 5-7

(30) No.III: V, text-lines 8-9 (prapta-sakala-Kosala-mandal-adhipatyah)

(31) No.III:XI, verse 20

(32) No.III:XI, verse 12

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(35) The Lodha and incomplete Burhikhar (Mallar) charters were given in the fifty seventh year of his rule.

(36) No.III : XI, verse 12 and Hiralal, ICPB 13, 110, no. 183

(37) Bhaskarvarman is mentioned in No. III: IX, text line 13.

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Mahendragiri

The Mount Mahendra, well known since ancient times stand at 1501 meters height. It is located between 18-58′-10″ N latitude and 85-26′-4″ E longitudes and comes under the undivided Ganjam district of Orissa. The Bay of Bengal view is most thrilling experience from the top of the Mahendragiri. Most ancient references show that the eastern slope of the mount was one entry point; and now a pucca road takes the route from the western direction. The mount continues down south with the Eastern Ghats. There are many small hills along it. The mount Mahendra is plain on its top. The mount Mahendra has innumerous streams flowing on it and most of them form the Rusikulya and Mahendra tanya rivers and thence flow down. The area is filled with thick forest. The hill top mostly remains cloudy as has been said earlier with frequent clouds looming over it.

According to N.K.Sahu,(1) "The Mahendra mountain range of the Eastern Ghats forms an important geographical feature of Kalinga and it is regarded by many royal dynasties in the past as their respective cradle land. It was thus important as a seat of political activities and became famous as a centre of religious and cultural life of Kalinga.

The Mahendra region was originally inhabited by the Sabaras and Pulindas.

The Mahabharata declares this mountain as an important seat of Aryan culture, where Parasurama, the champion of Brahmanism is said to have performed penance.(2)

In the 2nd century A.D. Gautamiputra Satakarni is known to have extended his empire in the East upto the Mahendra hill.(3)

In the Raghuvamsa of Kalidasa the Mahendra mountain finds

prominent mention and it is regarded there as the very heart of Kalinga. Raghu, in course of his Digvijaya is said to have conquered Kalinga and according to the poet the occupation of Mahendra by Raghu signifies his over-lordship over Kalinga.(4) The poet calls the king of Kalinga as the 'Lord of Mahendra'(5) and suggests that the political headquarters of Kalinga was in the Mahendra region.

The southern expeditions of Samudragupta as described in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription, we know from this inscription that the king of Kalinga, whose headquarters was at Pistapura, was named as 'Mahendra-giri' after this famous hill.

__The importance of the Mahendra hill as the religious and cultural centre of Kalinga was further enhanced with the advent of the Eastern Gangas, who installed their family deity Lord Gokarneswara on the crest of this mountain. The Ganga kings worship Gokarneswaraswami of Mahendra in the preamble of their charters.(6)

The Sailodbhavas of Kongoda had great reverence for this hill and they regarded it as a Kulagiri.(7)

An early group of temples standing on the Mahendragiri indicates that this was an important seat of Saivite culture during medieval period."

Pliny writers, "Next to Prasii, in the interior, came the Monedes and the Suari to whom belonged Mount Maleus on which shadows fell towards the north in winter, and to the south in summer, for six months alternately Ganguli considered Mount Maleus as the beautiful Malyagiri in Pal Lahra, in whose vicinity Sauras are found. Verrier Elwin suggested Mahendragiri of Paralakhemundi to be Mount Maleus, which we too agree because of its height and that proves the shadow factor as has been suggested by Pliny in his writing. This part we have dealt elsewhere.

As can be seen from Podagadha of Umerkote region of undivided Koraput, the fort of the Nala King was located on the top of the

tallest hill in that region; similar situation of Mahendragiri where first the Mathra dynasty ruled reminds that perhaps the fall of the king and his fort was regarded as fall of the Kingdom. Thus Sahu writes, that even in Medieval period the conquest of Kalinga was considered complete only after the occupation of the Mahendra. (8) Thus they had made their seat of ruling on the top of such hills which was inaccessible and not easy to take over because of its steep slopes and strategic location. Moreover, the Mathras of Kalinga and Nala of Dakshina Koshala(part of Koraput) were more or less of the same period.

Soon after the expedition of Samudragupta, the Mathra dynasty from the 4th century A.D. acquired the ruling of Kalinga. They were in the region of Mahendra, thus the main areas of their territory extended all around the Mahendra mountain, where they might have installed their family deity, like the Gangas who immediately succeeded them on the top of Mahendra mount, there are three dilapidated temples which are known as Yudhisthira, Bhima and Kunti. According to the local traditions, those temples were constructed by the Pandavas, when they visited the locality.

There is another popular Sabara tradition, that two brothers Rama and Bhima came(8) to the hill top of Mahendra, where they settled and due course they occupied the range of hills and thence extended to Vindhya Central India.

__Mishra wrote, " In the Mahabharata Vana-Parva, we find that the Pandavas on their way to Kalinga, arrived at the river Vaitarani where they took their sacred bath. Their guide, the sage Lomasa, advised them to climb on a Vedi, which had been raised by Bhudevi, at the request of the sage Kasyapa. Lomasa asked Yudhisthira to climb upon the Vedi to be blessed and thus to acquire divine prowess. The Pandavas accordingly climbed on the Vedi after they had a sacred bath in the sea and went to the Mahendra hill to rest during the night. Some scholars interpret that the Vedi mentioned in the Mahabharata may be identified with Puri or the Nilacala. Unfortunately, we do not have any trace of a hill in the neighbourhood of Puri or on its

sea-shore. From the descriptions of the Mahabharata, we have to search for this Vedi which must have been on the mountain or near the mountain, close to the sea-shore and was considered as a sacred place. Which other place in Kalinga fits with this description if it is not the Mahendra mountain?"(9)

Similar expression has appeared from Korni copper plate grant of Chodaganga (1078-1148), there is a verse which has described the five sons of Chodoganga of Ganga dynasty, Kamarnava, Darnava, Gunarnava, Marasimha and Vajrahasta came to Mahendra like the five Pandavas, they worshipped the god Gokarna-svamin.(10)

_As already said, the Sailobhava kings of Kongada regarded the Mahendra mountain as the sacred seat of their progenitor. The Gangas regarded Gokarnesvara as their family god, and the Sailodbhavas worshipped Syvambhu as the progenitor of their family and possibly were installed on Mahendra mount.(11)

__The Mahendra region was originally inhabited by the Sabaras and Pulindas, but about the early Christian era civilised races began their settlement in that area.

The temples of Bhima, Yudhisthira and Kunti on Mahendra mountain:

The Bhima temple is unique in archeological point of view among all others on the Mahendra mount. It belongs to earliest age of temple construction in Orissa. The temple is complete with seven huge cut pieces of granite stones. It is apparently belongs to Gupta period as has been suggested by many. The Bhima temple stands around 25 feet height. The largest single piece of stone in construction of this temple is 9 feet in length, 4 feet wide and height of 3 feet; thus it comes to around 100 cubic feet(12).

A very similar temple, made out of nine cut stones, is found on the top of the hill of Jagamanda village, near Gunupur of undivided Koraput district not far away from Mahendragiri. The temple has

Siva linga and is named Nilakanthesvara. A small inscription discovered on the temple which reads the name of Dharmakirti. It may possible be referred to Dharmakiriti, a Buddhist teacher of Kalinga, who had defeated Kumarilabhatta(13). Thus it may be possible that Bhima temple was constructed earlier and before Dharmakiriti, may be during or before Mathra dynasty. There is archeological evidence supporting it.

The Kunti temple is also called as Gokarnesvara temple. It is around 30 feet tall, the temple indicates Kalinga art of construction. The shrine of Gokarnesvara, siva is an ancient one, and have been seen in copper plate inscription of Ganga kings of Svetaka dating back to 5th century.(14)

At the entrance to the temple, there are two inscriptions dating back to 1045 and 1055 century A.D. It is the opinion of archeologist that the temples have been rebuilt in 12th century. Panigrahy says that it may have been constructed during Ganga dynasty (5th to 6th century A.D.) it may have been repaired in later period.(15)

The Yudhisthira temple, on Mahendragiri is placed in late part of 6th century A.D.(16). The construction is similar to Somesvara and Madhukeswara temples of Mukhalingam in neighbouring Srikakulam, but the sculpture construction is different. There is a Buddhist construction tinge in it. There is a stone inscription of Rajendrachola which has been depicted in Kalingapur and has been built.

The Sabara king was ruling Mahendra, Matharas came and overpowered Sabara. It is possible that Mathras may have installed Narayana and worshipped him. It is also not unlikely that Mathras worshipped the same deity of Sabaras by Aryanising it at the same place. Then came the Ganga dynasty who ruled Kalinga for several years, and issued almost all inscriptions in the Mahendra. The Ganga were Saivas, and worshipped the same deity of Mathras as Gokarnesvara. The Sailodbhavas came and perhaps worshipped both Siva and Visnu, which is evident from their records.

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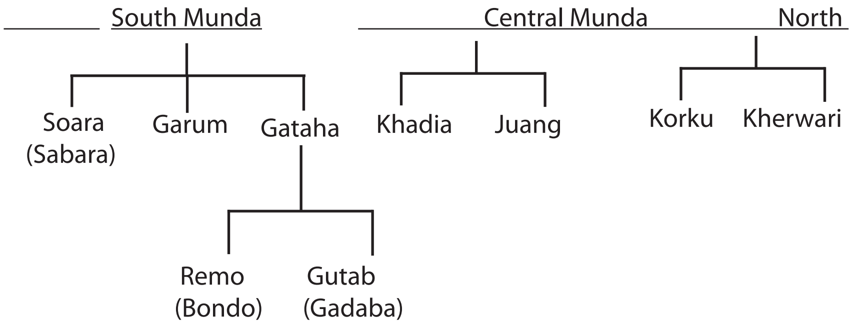
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